







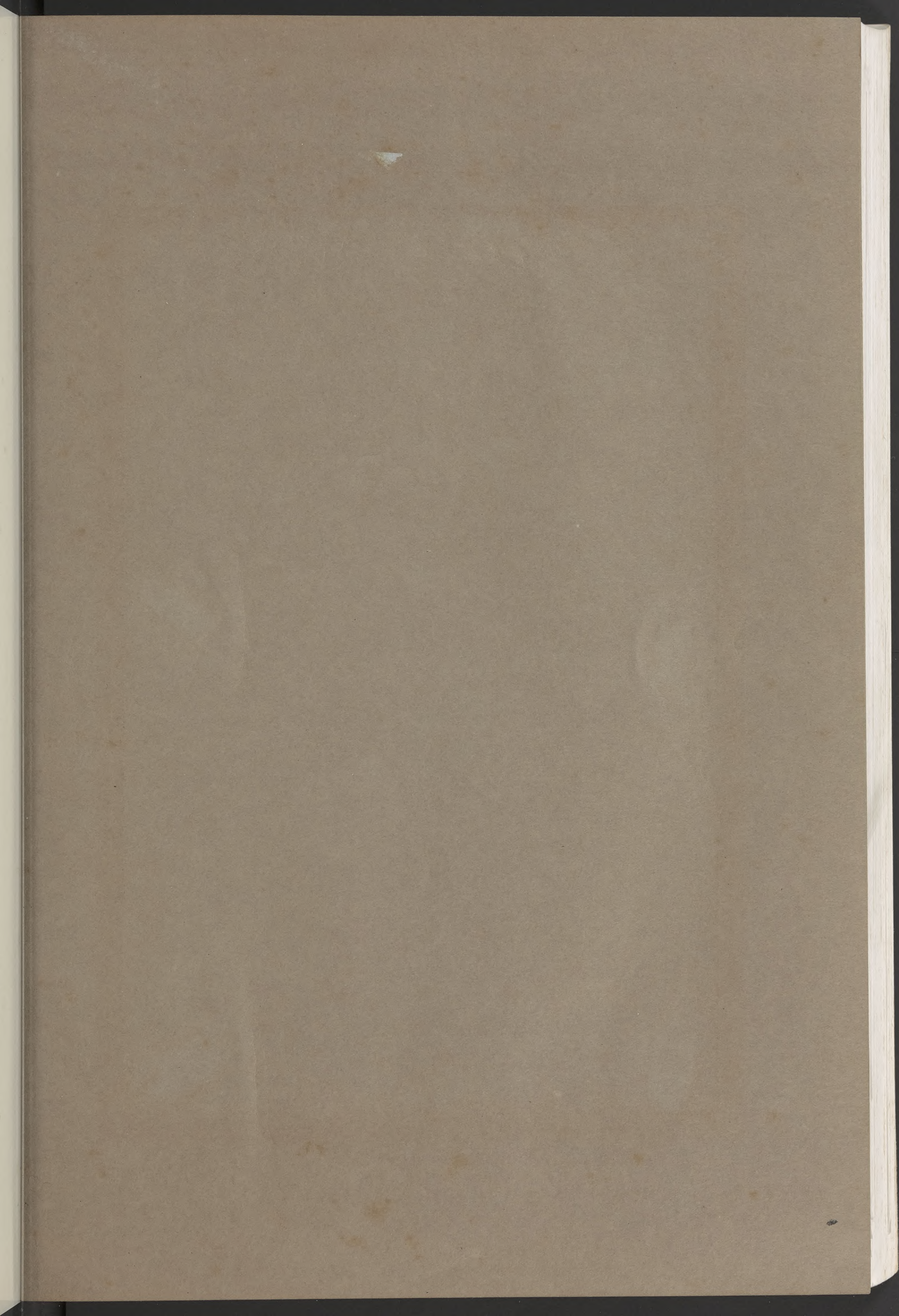
TWENTY-FIVE GREAT  
HOUSES OF FRANCE















A ROOF AT CHAMBORD



# TWENTY-FIVE GREAT HOUSES OF FRANCE

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*To Jane Elizabeth Cook  
Whose Love for the Beauty embodied  
the Renaissance Châteaux  
is only equalled by  
Her Sympathy with the Fighting Spirit  
typified by the Gothic Fortresses  
of France,  
This Book is dedicated by  
Her grateful son  
the Writer*

Printed in Great Britain.



## AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

*"Mark well her bulwarks, set up her houses, that ye may tell them that come after."*

THOUGH the Great War has altered many an outlook and driven into everlasting limbo many books composed before its devastating cataclysm swept over Europe, I venture to think that a volume which begins with the story of Mont St. Michel, of Carcassonne, of Château Gaillard, and of Pierrefonds, would not be inappropriate to the most military age. Through all the poisonous reek of modern science on the field of battle the ancient principle of human valour, human self-sacrifice, human chivalry has remained eternal; intangible, although not unassailable, it has withstood the mightiest onslaught ever organised against the elemental principles of honour and of freedom; the spirit that held out in Carcassonne has shone again at Ypres; the men who fought at Château Gaillard have made a "Saucy Castle" of every trench from Soissons to the sea. The ghost of many a warrior whose life is recorded in these pages must have revisited the glimpses of the battlefields he knew so well so long ago, a mightier cannonade than Louis d'Orleans ever heard has shaken the buttresses of Pierrefonds and the valley of the Aisne during the Great War, and near the crumbling walls of Château Gaillard a greater host of Englishmen in arms than Cœur de Lion ever saw have been encamped and ready.

But there is another consideration, scarcely less arresting. Warfare to-day is far more terrible than any form of human struggle known before; it combines the elemental devastation of an earthquake with the scientific savagery of a highly organised and ruthless army. The soldiers who have destroyed the Cloth Hall of Ypres and the Cathedral of Rheims would not have been deterred by any considerations of romance or sentiment from wrecking finally any one of the "great houses" described in this book, had they been able to get near them. When the sacred fane which sheltered Joan of Arc and saw the crowning of so many Kings of France has been so barbarously ruined, it is but a fortunate accident that none of the historic monuments described in these pages has yet been shattered by the vandals who have invaded France. Chambord alone can show a definite mark upon its history due to the War, and luckily that mark is left, not on its architecture but on its ownership. For Chambord was bequeathed by a Prince of the Royal House of France to Prince Elie de Bourbon, who was a staff-captain in the Austrian Army when the war broke out, the husband of Marie-Anne, Archduchess of Austria, and brother-in-law of the heir to the Austrian throne. Until the end of April, 1914, his alien agent lived in the heart of the Loire country, the hostile despot over 289 inhabitants of the Sologne estate, some twenty-three miles in circumference. The Government of France has turned him out, and the most characteristic building of the most French of all her Kings has now returned to its true owners.

In the Introduction will be found an appreciation of the technical and architectural details of the buildings here described, written by a pen better versed than mine in what the professional architect desires to know. But the architect does not build for architects. He builds for one or more members of the public, and when I write about architecture myself, I only express the opinions of an ordinarily intelligent member of that public to whom this volume is partly addressed. To me there are three main characteristics of this collection which must at once be stated for any reader who desires to get the best he may



out of it; these may be briefly described as (1) the builders, (2) the guardians, (3) the different types of which examples have been chosen to furnish forth our list of twenty-five great houses. Let me take these characteristics one by one.

#### THE BUILDERS.

Such stupendous erections as Mont St. Michel are not so much the work of any individual man, or men, as the accomplished prayer of tens of thousands. That is one reason why the names of so many master-masons are lost; they lived in their completed masonry alone; they were swallowed up in the sincerity and vital strength of a passionate and national religion which expressed itself in the Cathedrals and monasteries of the thirteenth century. It was the Church which alone preserved through the Dark Ages the fundamental principles of art, of civilisation, of architecture. It was the abbey of Cluny which sent forth the first great artists in the school rightly called "French Gothic" (as opposed to any development of "pointed" architecture elsewhere) which is here illustrated by Mont St. Michel. That style was equally effective in such great fortress towns as Carcassonne, whose first ramparts were set up by Visigoths in the fifth century, while its final line of external defence was completed towards the close of the thirteenth. What military building had become by the end of the twelfth century can be seen from the massive ruins of Richard Cœur de Lion's saucy castle on the Seine, Château Gaillard; and it is most interesting to observe how the very complications of defence which lost Roger de Lacey that famous Plantagenet stronghold were improved and simplified at Pierrefonds, the stronghold built for Louis d'Orleans in 1400.

In the very next house upon my list comes the instance I require for this note on the builders of French houses. We have had religious or political communities, we have had Kings and princes of the blood; but now we come to the house of Jacques Cœur in Bourges, a home neither military nor political, but frankly for civic, family life; the first of the many contributions to French architecture made by the French financiers. We may imagine that it was in building from about 1440 until the chapel was finished in 1450. Three years afterwards the house was "sold up," and in 1456 Jean Cœur himself was dead in Chios. In 1659 his house passed to Colbert, and it is now the High Court of the province. This is catastrophe enough. But it is equalled by the tragedy of Vaux le Vicomte. On August 17th, 1661, was given the entertainment to Louis XIV which both celebrated the completion of the Palace and signed the death warrant of its master. Fouquet, the "Surintendant de Finance," was arrested by D'Artagnan at Nantes and "moved on" to the Bastille, where Madame de Sévigné remained his firm friend. In 1680 he died at Pignerol, next to the dungeon which guarded the impenetrable secret of the Man with the Iron Mask. Colbert had taken his office under the new title of "Comptroller General," and Colbert was careful to die before he was disgraced. Then there is Bohier, who built Chenonceaux; Florimond Robertet, who built the Hôtel d'Alluye in Blois; Jacques de Beaune Semblancay, who was murdered on the gibbet of Montfaucon; Jean Bourré, the builder of Langeais; Berthelot of Azay le Rideau; and many more. They built the most beautiful houses in France, and left a tragedy to haunt each one.

#### THE GUARDIANS.

Of course, if an old house has stood untouched and unchanged throughout the generations, so much the better. But good fortune of that complete kind is very rare, and a more subtle danger is arising in these modern days when landed possessions are gradually going out of fashion. So that I should like to emphasise a custom that is growing up in France as a suggestion to be thought over by rich men in a country which has only just begun to realise what a "Historic Monument" can really be. The custom is visible in the legacy of Langeais by M. Siegfried, and of Chantilly by the Duc d'Aumale to the guardianship of the Institut de France; it is visible in the purchase from Countess Coatgourden, for £10,000, of the Château of Kerjean, which is to become a museum of Breton history and archæology, just as the Princess Narishkine enabled the Department of Finistère



to preserve Kériolet for similar purposes. For £8,000 the French Government has also bought Azay le Rideau, which was opened by M. Dujardin-Beaumetz in 1910 as the typical home of the French Renaissance. Chaalis, the scene of Perrault's *Belle au Bois Dormant*, has also been left (by Madame André) to the Institut. Many another famous building has been classified as a "Monument Historique," and its care is assumed as a privilege by the State.

Only just lately the Hôtel de Biron in Paris has been bought by the French Government for no less than £320,000; and Maisons Laffitte, that beautiful example of seventeenth century design which had nearly suffered wholesale destruction, was also purchased for £8,000. When all this has been done lovers of Old France feel justified in asking for more. Why are the priceless contemporary carvings of the Field of the Cloth of Gold in the Maison Bourgtheroulde at Rouen left to decay without a record save the casts in the Crystal Palace? What reason is there for turning the fortress of King René at Tarascon into a common gaol for malefactors? Why has the Palace of the Popes at Avignon been so neglected as a military barrack that the Italian frescoes have in many cases been irretrievably ruined, and the whole fabric of the interior has been debased and mutilated? But, after all, this only emphasises our delight at what has been done already. And that so much good work has been accomplished is due not only to the system of "Monuments Historiques," but to the "Ministre des Beaux Arts" as well. We are trying to copy one, when shall we have the other? I can think of no better system of guardianship than that which enables the visitor to see the types of so many different ages that are preserved in France to-day.

#### THE TYPES OF DIFFERENT STYLES.

I am so far in touch with the technical writer as to recognise in architecture the most logical and reasonable of the arts, and to realise that styles only change because the men who build them have different requirements, different possibilities of construction. To me, therefore, the mixed façade at Loches, with feudal Gothic on the left and French Renaissance on the right, is a delightful symbol of a transition in thought and life which has expressed itself in stone. At Josselin the Gothic is outside, and the light and beauty of the Renaissance is within. In each case there is as much difference noticeable as there is between the fortress home of Pierrefonds and the private house of Jacques Cœur. For some time, fortunately, we have the transition very apparent from the fortress to the hunting seat, from garrison life to civilisation. Only in such houses as Serrant, Valençay, or Vaux le Vicomte is the sole idea of a home in the country clearly carried out in the design. None of these could be fortresses as well. The military idea has vanished. Azay le Rideau marks the first logically consistent change of plan and detail. Cheverny is as much a country house as Audley End. The evolution took longer in France than it did here, because "public safety" appeared more slowly across the Channel. That is why French Cathedrals were usually surrounded by houses. The "Parvis" of Notre Dame is quite modern. The gracious expanse of turf round Salisbury Cathedral is part of an original plan impossible in France at the same period.

Carved upon a lonely obelisk on Bewcastle Moor, you may still see the inscription: "Orisons for a Soul's great Sin." Amid the silence of records and the unknown vicissitudes of fortune attending princes near a throne that prayer without a name makes its appeal to every generation. We are sometimes faced by sad, inexplicable fragments of this kind that have survived from pains and passions we have never known, and suddenly emerge, like storm-scarred islands, out of the misty ocean of the Past. Sometimes it is a letter, like that pathetic, time-stained scrap of parchment found in the vaults of the old church of St. Pierre in Montmartre. It was buried with Jean de Gisors, who must have fallen in the fight on the battlements just after he had written it, 700 years ago. It gave assurance to the Lady Alice de Lisle of his devotion to her in what were the last moments of his life. Many such letters from our modern soldiers have been found within the last few months in France and Flanders,<sup>1</sup> and perhaps many more may survive in unknown graves, 700 years to come, and future antiquaries will moralise over the War begun in 1914, and



the men who fought and died in it. Of such records the history of the Châteaux in this book is full; and it will already have been recognised by every sympathetic reader that, though I have a good deal to say of architecture, the great houses in this book have meant much more than masonry to me. They have given shelter to generations of interesting people. And in almost every château there is one character that seems to stand out above the rest, like Louis d'Orleans at Pierrefonds, or Anne of Brittany at Langeais, or Agnes Sorel at Loches, "en son vivant Dame de Beaulté"; or Mary Queen of Scots at Amboise, Talleyrand at Valençay, Marshal Saxe at Chambord, the Daillons at Le Lude, the great Condé at Chantilly, Anthony Walsh at Serrant, or Duchess Diana at Anet. There is good company for you! And to them I lead you through the gates of ivory and horn.

T. A. C.



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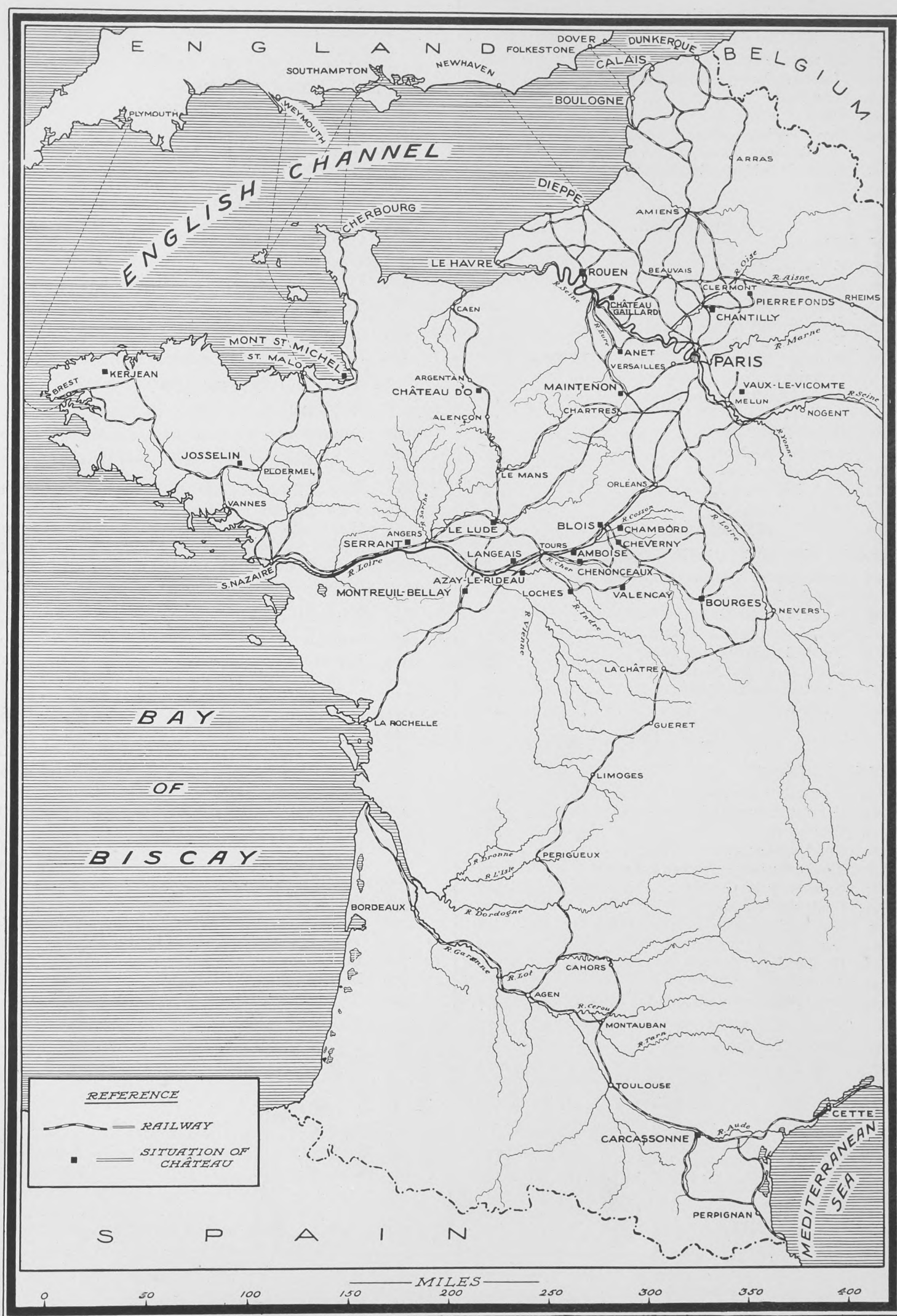
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MAP OF WESTERN FRANCE: SHOWING POSITIONS OF THE TWENTY-FIVE HOUSES.



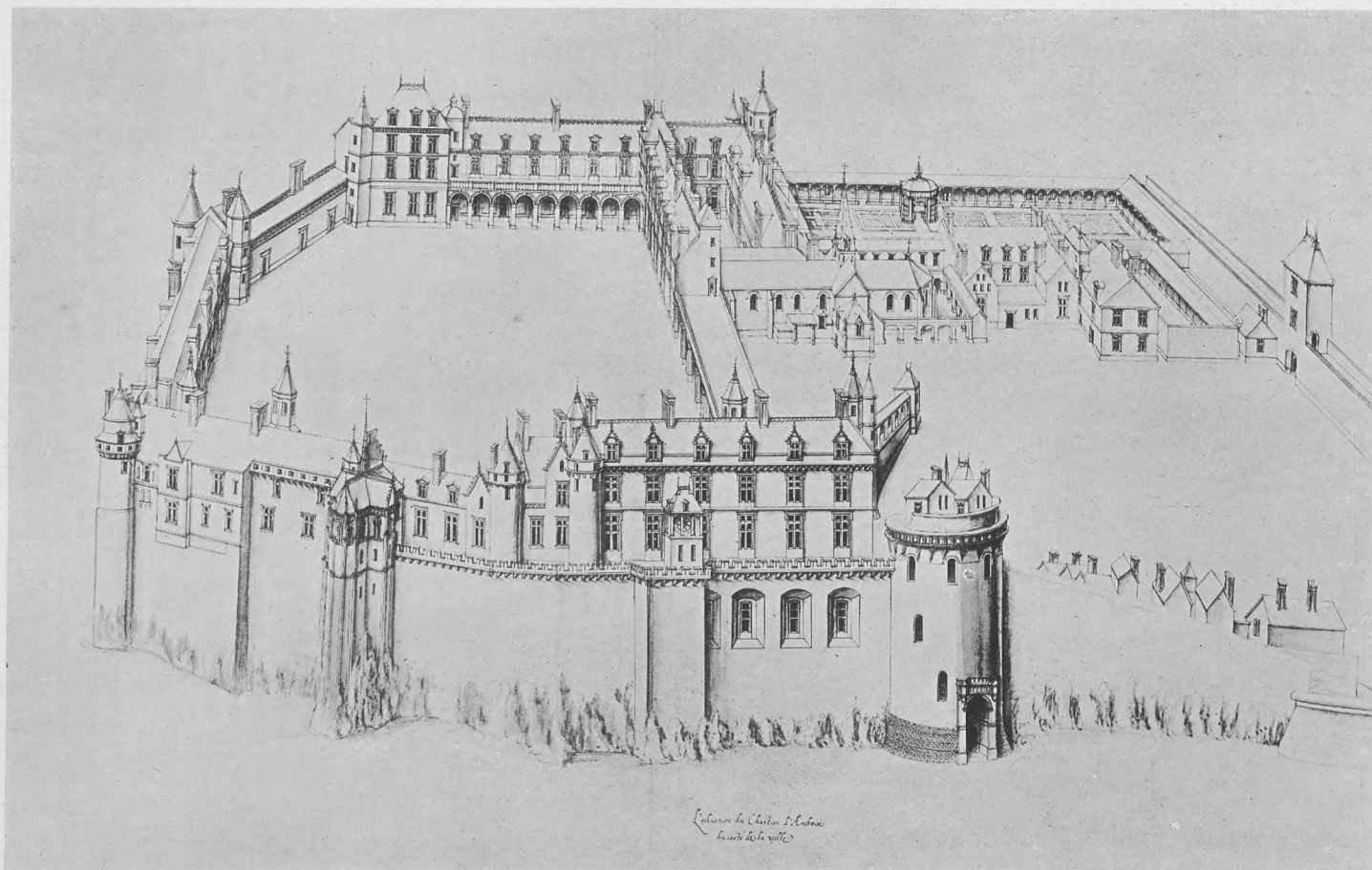
## INTRODUCTION.

By W. H. WARD, M.A., F.S.A.

**T**WENTY-FIVE great houses of France are illustrated and described in the following pages. They range in character from the citadel of a royal borough to the country seat of a Minister of State, from a great fortified monastic establishment exposed on its beetling rock to the buffets of wind and ocean to a substantial burgher's residence snugly ensconced in the crowding streets of a great city. In date they range over five centuries. They have commended themselves for selection by very various qualifications: one as a type of mediæval military engineering; another as pre-eminent for its picturesque qualities; a third as endowed with the choicest beauties of the architecture of its age; a fourth for the importance of the part it has played in history or for the romantic careers of its owners.

It would be difficult to lay one's finger on any one characteristic, any one principle of structure, arrangement or decorative treatment, which they have in common. Yet, studied collectively, they will be found to constitute, within strictly defined limits, a fairly complete picture of the development of domestic architecture in France from the end of the fourteenth to the middle of the seventeenth centuries, as represented in the houses of the great—the title itself precludes any notice of the humbler sort of dwellings, the cottages of the peasantry or the houses of the urban artisan and shopkeeper. On the other hand, by breaking off as it does at the moment of the assumption of supreme power by Louis XIV, the series only reaches the fringe of the achievements of the ripe Classical school, of which François Mansart was the leader.

The first three houses illustrated in the following pages cannot be considered as typical of domestic architecture. The arrangements of Mont St. Michel are monastic where they are



I.—THE CHATEAU OF AMBOISE, FROM A DRAWING BY J. A. DU CERCEAU.



not military, while the castles of Carcassonne and Gaillard are devised wholly from the point of view of military exigencies, the convenience of the inhabitants being considered only so far as it was consistent with military security. It is not till we come to the great fortress-palace of Pierrefonds, rebuilt at the end of the fourteenth century, that we find an instance where the commodious housing of the lord and his family receives attention comparable to that bestowed on defence; for, in this great building, while from the military point of view nothing was neglected, the domestic arrangements were not merely fully up to the current standard of comfort, but, as befitted so magnificent a prince as Louis, Duke of Orleans, brother of the King of France, they displayed all the splendour and luxury of which the age was capable.

Pierrefonds is instructive by the light it throws upon the subsequent developments of French domestic architecture; but, at the same time, there are considerations which should make us cautious of regarding it as fully typical of the mansions of its age. In the first place, it was the residence of a royal prince of quite exceptional wealth and power, who, through his wife, was to some extent under the influence of the polished and luxurious Court of Milan. And, again, we have before us for the most part not the original building itself, but a modern reconstitution of it. The archæological erudition and scrupulous honesty of Viollet le Duc are not in question. But we must not be blind to the possibility that in such a vast undertaking as the restoration of Pierrefonds there was room for human fallibility, and in his reading of indications supplied by the remains he may unconsciously have been betrayed into under or over statements. His internal decorations, for instance, are undoubtedly of a character which no student of mediæval architecture at the present day would allow to pass unchallenged, and there is at least the possibility that similar misinterpretations may have crept in in the fabric itself.

After all possible deductions, however, we must recognise that there are many features in the plan of Pierrefonds which are thoroughly typical and can be traced in those of later houses. The castle was approached through a fortified outer bailey (A), in which were the stables (Fig. III). This communicated by a drawbridge (H) across a dry moat with a middle bailey, which was separated from the inner bailey or castle proper by another dry moat, spanned by another drawbridge defended by a barbican. In the three baileys we may see the prototypes of the basecourt, forecourt and court of honour which occur, more or less complete, in residences of a more peaceful age.

The inner bailey, which contains all the vital parts of the great organism of the castle, consists of a space enclosed within high curtain walls with round towers at its angles and in its flanks, while its remaining buildings are set against the inner faces of these walls, and look, for the most part, into the interior courtyard. The space thus enclosed is not a regular one, but conforms in outline to the irregularities of the site, and the buildings, though they show a certain rough symmetry in plan, are far from symmetrical as regards form and size.

The system of military defence which Pierrefonds exemplifies is a very different one from that of Carcassonne or Gaillard. In the earlier period the object of a castle builder was to provide a number of self-contained forts, each able to sustain a siege after the fall of the others, the last stand being made in the great donjon, a tower larger than the rest, which usually contained the lord's own lodging, besides accommodation for a small garrison, a well, stores and all that was requisite for sustaining a siege of some duration. With the object of prolonging the defence, access from one tower to another was made so intricate and devious that only the inmates could find it; so much so, indeed, that even the defenders were impeded by its difficulties, and sometimes its purpose was thus defeated.

In practice, however, it had been found that once the *enceinte* was broken neither the towers nor the keep could be held, and the invention of artillery in the fourteenth century contributed to the downfall of the system. In its stead was devised the so-called "concentric" system, in which a castle was defended *enceinte* by *enceinte* instead of tower by tower, and the innermost *enceinte* standing or falling as a whole, the keep became an anachronism. At Pierrefonds the outer defences comprised, in addition to the middle and outer wards, a complex system of entrenchments, bastions and redans, with which we are not here concerned.

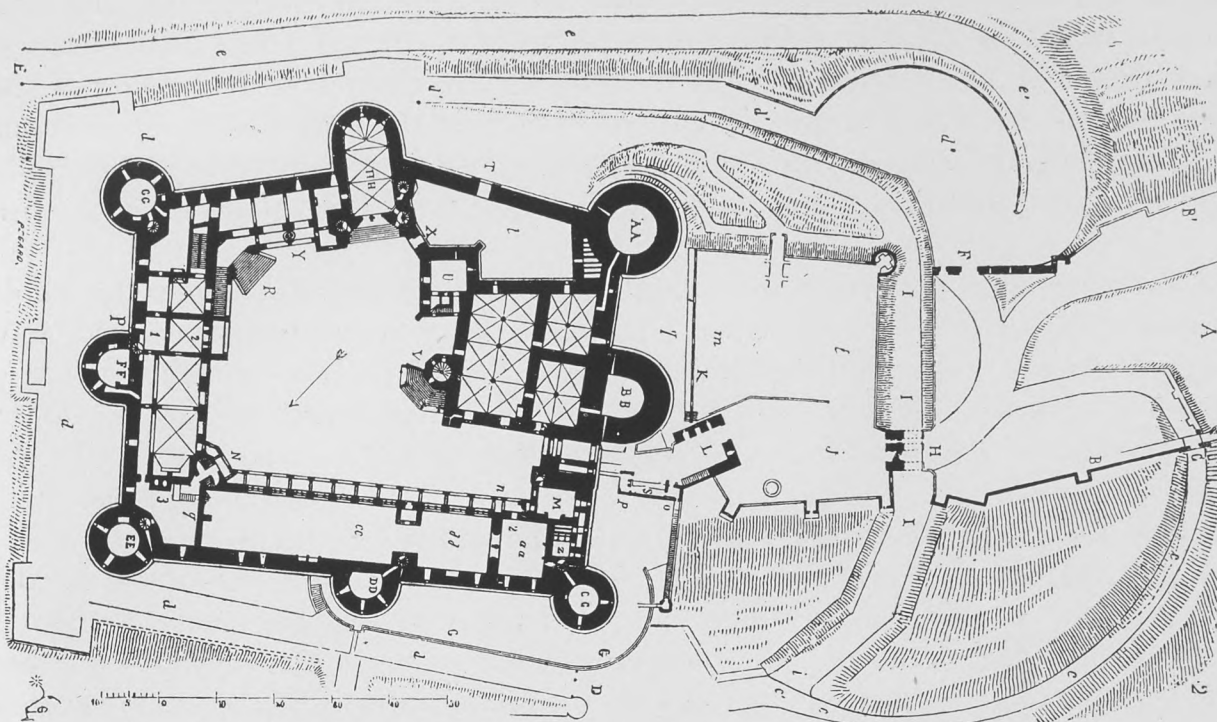
The walls of the inner bailey and its towers were made of sufficient strength to resist the somewhat feeble artillery of the day, and were virtually unpierced below their summit. This





II.—RAMBURES : THE ENTRANCE.





III.—PLAN OF PIERREFONDS (FROM VIOLET LE DUC).

A, Outer Bailey; H, Outer Drawbridge; I, Moat; K, Middle Bailey; L, Barbican; M, Guard Room; N, North Staircase to Hall Galleries; P, Postern; R, East Staircase; T, Postern; U, Look-out Tower; V, Donjon Staircase; Z, Latrines; AA, Charlemagne Tower; BB, Cæsar Tower; CC, Arthur Tower; DD, Alexander Tower; EE, Godfrey of Bouillon Tower; FF, Joshua Tower; GG, Hector Tower; HH, Judas Maccabæus Tower (Chapel); aa, Anteroom; cc, Lower Hall; I, Inner Court.

was crowned by an "allure," or *chemin de ronde*, on bold machicolations, making the complete circuit of the walls and towers, and giving easy access for the garrison from any part to any other. In some parts there are two or even three tiers of allures. A similar arrangement is to be seen

in the small contemporary castle of Rambures in Picardy (Fig. II). The upper portions of the towers in direct communication with the allures were devoted to the use of the most reliable men, generally the lord's own feudal retainers, who also had charge of the gatehouse and other posts of trust. The mercenaries, on the other hand, who could never be completely depended upon not to sell themselves to a higher bidder, were confined to their own quarters, and only employed where there was least opportunity for treachery, while the internal communications between their quarters and the rest of the castle were so contrived that they could not easily approach either the state or private apartments of the lord, or reach the ramparts except under the command of a trustworthy officer.

So much for the system of defence. We may now turn to the distribution of the various departments at Pierrefonds. On the right of the gateway as one enters stands a bold mass of buildings, which bears a *prima facie* resemblance to a keep. But while it still goes by the name of donjon, its functions are different. Although it is flanked by three sturdy towers—the massive cylindrical Charlemagne Tower (AA) and semi-cylindrical Cæsar Tower (BB) and the tall, square look-out tower (U) in the court—its capacity for holding out, after the capture of any part of the inner ward, is insignificant. Its wide staircase (V), open to the court, and its large windows would render it practically indefensible, and its water supply, consisting only of a rain-water cistern in the small enclosed court, to the east of it, could not be relied upon. If it contains all that is necessary for the life of the lord's family and immediate retinue—stores, kitchens, latrines, as well as reception and sleeping apartments—that is merely in order to secure them from intrusions on the part of the mercenary garrison or of outsiders admitted to the castle. It is, in fact, a comfortable, and even a luxurious, residence, amply lit by great windows with views into the country from the upper storeys, and warmed by fireplaces, the rooms being arranged in suites, one large one with two smaller ones opening out of it on each floor of the main block, with access to additional ones in the adjoining towers, and, through one of these to the chapel in the remoter tower, named after Judas Maccabæus.

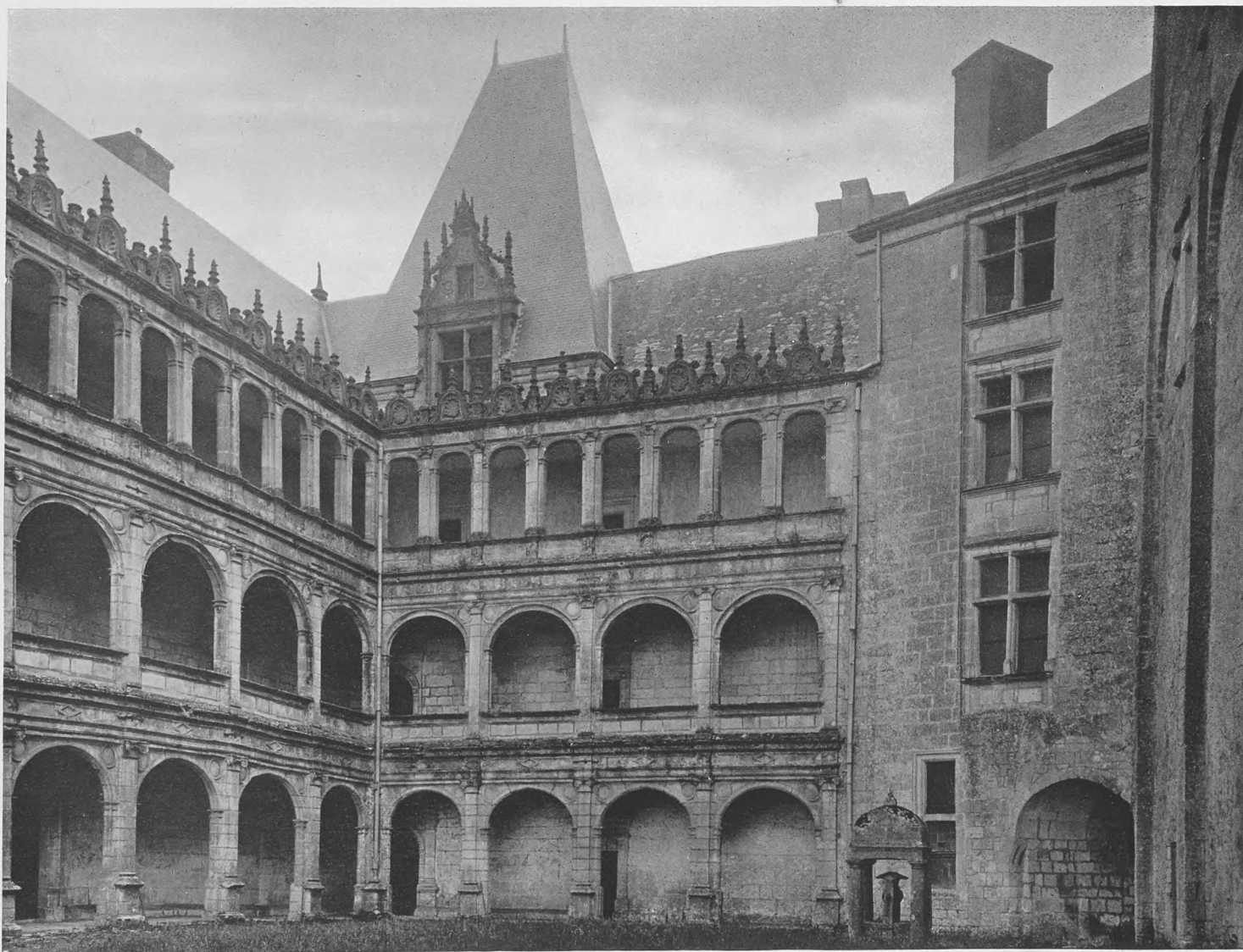
If the donjon of Pierrefonds was no longer the last stronghold of the fortress, it was still in a very real way the centre of its defence, for, from it, the lord could direct all operations. Apart from the allure on the ramparts above, he had the possibility of betaking himself or sending orders to any part of the castle by means of passages or galleries, though these were so



intricate that only he and his most trusted officers could thread them all without risk of losing their way. Generally speaking, at Pierrefonds, as in all great mediæval houses, the readiest route in peace time from one part to another was by crossing the court and taking one of the numerous staircases—almost invariably spiral—which served each of the towers or other divisions of the building. Straight stairs are, for the most part, only found in short flights, generally uncovered, leading from the courts to some point on the first floor, or communicating with the ramparts.

On the left of the gateway as one enters is a straight range of buildings occupying the whole of the north-west side of the castle. First comes the guardroom (M), with latrines adjacent (Z), and, beyond, the prison in the Arthur Tower at the angle (CC); next, an anteroom, or vestibule (aa), leading into a lower hall, divided unequally into two portions by projecting structures. This lower hall constitutes the barracks of the mercenaries—it was here they ate, drilled and slept. In the return wing on the north-east are the kitchens for the meals of the garrison and the state banquets, and between them and the chapel in the Judas Maccabæus Tower are various store-rooms. Along the inner face of the lower hall runs a covered way, giving access from it to the guardroom at one end and the kitchen at the other. This covered way has been glazed by Viollet-le-Duc. If he has any authority for doing so—which may be questioned—this fact bespeaks a degree of luxury almost without parallel in mediæval castles, where such covered ways were almost invariably as fully open to the air as the staircases. The covered way or open passage persisted throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries—a rich Renaissance example is shown in the illustration from La Rochefoucauld (Fig. IV). Open staircases continued in use till late in the seventeenth century (Figs. X and 197).

At the north angle of the court a double spiral staircase (N) leads from the lower gallery to the upper floor, where a splendid apartment occupies the whole space above the two lower ones.



IV.—LA ROCHEFOUCAULD: THE COURT, LOOKING SOUTH.



This is the great hall of the castle used by the lord, his guests and chief retainers for all state purposes. At the dais at the northern end, and in front of the great chimney of the Nine Valiant Ladies, his seat was set when he held a court of justice, presided at a banquet, or watched masques or dancing.

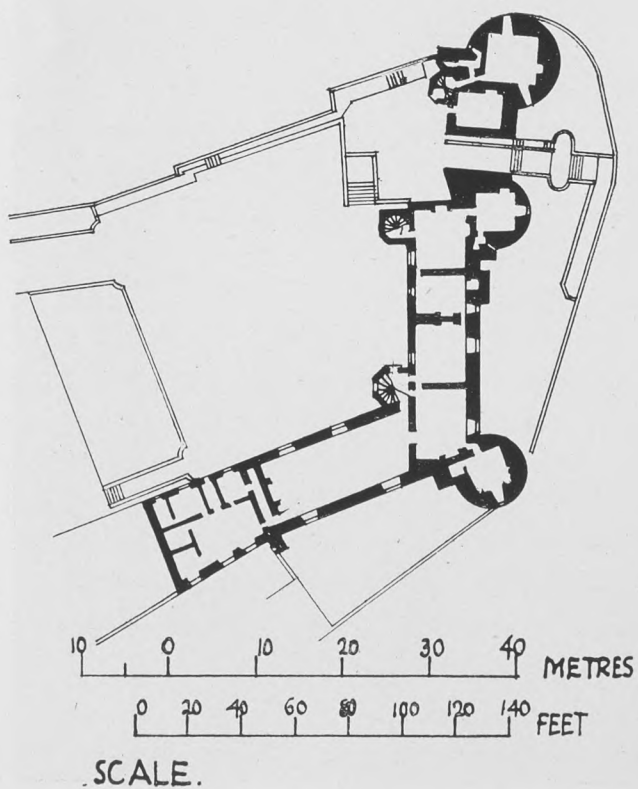
It is not clear what was the original destination of the rooms situated on the upper floors between the hall and the chapel. Viollet-le-Duc seems to assign them to the garrison, which, however, he has already quartered in the lower hall, and to stores, but the fact that they are served by the most important staircase in the castle (R), that which ascends in the east angle of the court, seems rather to suggest they may have been intended for the reception of guests of mark with their retinues, who could hardly have been accommodated with sufficient state within the donjon already occupied by the lord's own family.

If, as remarked above, Pierrefonds can hardly be regarded as a normal example of the domestic architecture of the later Middle Ages, in view of the luxurious and commodious character of its arrangements, it has many characteristics in common with contemporary castles, characteristics which appear in them in a more excessive form. Such are, first, the irregularity and lack of symmetry in its plan; secondly, the system of planning which aims rather at isolating the various departments and connecting them only just so far as is absolutely necessary, than at an organic scheme of intercommunication, a point illustrated by the use of frequent spiral staircases, the scantiness of corridors—those which exist being mostly in the nature of covered ways and open to the air—and, thirdly, the avoidance of all large openings on the outer walls—there is only one real entrance, the posterns (P, T) being many feet above the external level and impracticable from the outside except with assistance from within.

Such a general similarity as this is, in fact, all that we can expect between mediæval castles, even between those of the same period. For, apart from any caprices on the part of the owner, the very conditions under which they were raised tended to produce dissimilarity, and this more particularly in two points. First, the nature of the sites, chosen in reason of their defensibility, usually bounded on one or more sides by water or steep declivities, and often, in addition, uneven in surface, did not lend itself to uniformity or regularity; and, secondly, differences in arrangement and intricacies of planning were deliberately contrived so that the inmates alone should know their way about, and that an enemy, if he gained an entry in one part, should be confronted with as many difficulties as possible in penetrating to others. In a word, the absence of any generally adopted system of domestic planning, as well as the inconveniences still tolerated, are all due

to the dominance of military necessities or traditions; and mansions, up till the middle of the fifteenth century, however luxurious in their appointments, still bear traces of the time when the domestic requirements were squeezed in, as they are at Gaillard, wherever they were least in the way of the garrison and the system of defence. Certain relics of this state of affairs continued to prevail in the face of many alterations nearly two hundred years later.

The years which produced Pierrefonds fell in that interval of relative peace and brilliancy which came as a lull in the tempest of the Hundred Years' War. But it was hardly finished before the storms were let loose once more. Its brave and courtly builder was one of the first to lose his life in the blast of intestine strife which swept over France and prepared the way for the humiliation of the national arms before the English. It was not a period favourable to building, and our next great house dates from the beginning of an era of renewed calm.



V.—PLAN : LANGEAIS.

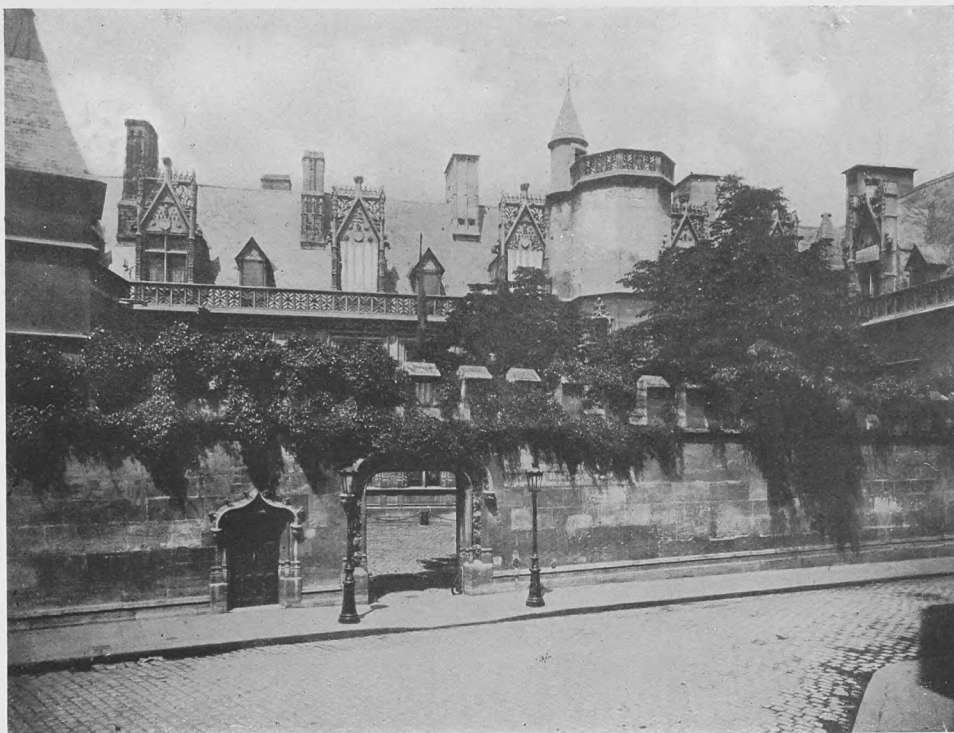


The middle of the fifteenth century brought with it many changes in the social life of France. In the final stage of the Hundred Years' War which saw the expulsion of the English armies a dormant consciousness of nationality was aroused, and the monarchy and middle classes grew in power at the expense of the feudal aristocracy. The nobles had given proof of their decadence, the result of luxurious living, by running away at Agincourt, and had assisted the national enemy by their factiousness and disloyalty. They thus lost much of their prestige, while, on the other

hand, the national victory had been brought about under the auspices of the Royal Government by the inspiration of the peasant girl, Joan of Arc, and the wise counsels of middle-class ministers, while the victorious campaigns of Dunois, a scion of the Royal House, had been rendered possible by the financial assistance of the *bourgeois* banker, Jacques Cœur.

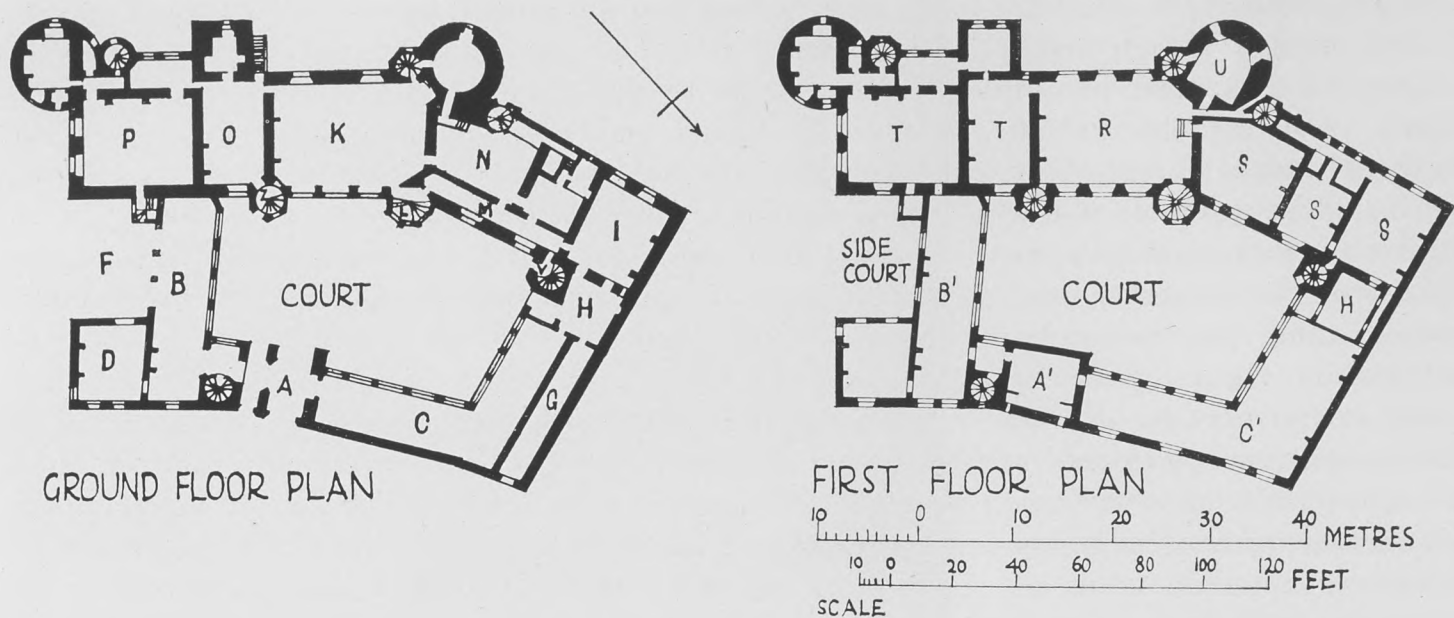
The stern centralising policy of Louis XI contributed largely to bring the nobility into subjection to the Crown, which no longer depended on feudal aids and feudal levies, but on national taxation and paid troops. The nobles, under a powerful central control, were debarred from their hereditary occupation of private warfare, and began to find their fortresses powerless to withstand the improved artillery of the day. At the same time, under settled government, there was a rapid growth in the prosperity of the nation, and the second half of the century was marked by a large increase in the building of important residences. These were in some cases built by members of the rising professional and mercantile classes, in others by the King or nobles who had profited by the general enrichment. In all cases they show the effects of the rising standard of comfort and the diminished importance of military considerations; the development, in fact, of the pleasure house as distinguished from the fortress, though it was long before country houses, from the great royal or baronial seat down to the humblest manor, gave up all semblance of defence. If they ceased to be tenable as against trained troops with siege trains, they remained strong enough to withstand a raid of armed skirmishers or a marauding party, and it is therefore not without reason that country mansions have in France continued to retain the name of "château."

Some of these changes are exemplified in the new castle of Langeais, built in 1464 for Louis XI by his treasurer, Jean Bourré. This building, however, is not wholly typical, being in the nature rather of an addition than of a complete residence. The massive old fortress at the upper end of the *enceinte*, begun nearly five centuries earlier by Fulk Nerra, was still formidable from the military point of view, but was quite unsuited for the habitation of a sovereign, even if his habits were as simple as those of Louis XI. The buildings at the lower end of the *enceinte* were therefore replaced by a new block, conforming in plan to the irregular outline of the old (Fig. v). Its walls were still of impressive thickness, its gateway still strongly protected with portcullis and drawbridge, its outer faces still crowned by a *chemin de ronde*, on bold machicolations; but its defences are, nevertheless, largely make-believe, and would be of little service in face of a serious attack, for the outer walls, as well as those towards the court, are pierced by numerous large windows, the lowest being, it is true, at a considerable distance from the ground. As regards internal planning, comfort is increasingly studied in the provision of five storeys of well-lit and warmed dwelling-rooms, but there is still an entire absence of



VI.—HOTEL DE CLUNY, PARIS.





VII.—MAISON DE JACQUES CŒUR: PLANS.

inter-communication, except by passing through the rooms, and the staircases are all still of a corkscrew type.

Before following further the development of the country seat, the most striking changes in which coincided with the introduction of Italian ideas at the close of the century, the state of the town mansion must be considered. This is a less easy task to pursue owing to the scantiness of the material, for the continuous habitation of cities and the value of urban sites have necessarily involved the destruction of almost all early examples of large residences, although a considerable number of smaller ones has survived from the thirteenth and fourteenth, and even the twelfth, centuries, particularly in some little towns of the South of France, such, for example, as Cordes and Figeac. These are all of the type usually described as “*maison*,” in which the main block, with or without shops, stands on the street, and has a court behind it, and occasionally has an extension at the back or side of the court. The large house of the type usually known as “*hôtel*,” of which practically the earliest example—the house of Jacques Cœur at Bourges—dates from the middle of the fifteenth century, is arranged differently. In many respects the *hôtel* resembles a contemporary castle in its planning, so far as circumstances permit or require it. Its buildings were grouped round the sides of a court. The surrounding properties to some extent took the place of the moat and *enceinte*, but where the site was exposed, as along the street front, a high screen wall comparable to the curtain wall of a castle was usual. This contained a more or less defended gate or gatehouse. And, as in the castle, it was utilised as the outer wall of structures facing inwards, as, for instance, the covered way, or cloister walk, which usually ran round one or more sides of the court. The main block, containing the principal apartments, lay at the back of the court, so as to be removed from the dirt and noise of the street, and was often higher than the remaining buildings, though the sides and screen not infrequently also possessed upper storeys. Behind the main block there often lay a garden enclosed in its own walls or those of surrounding houses, or perhaps merely another court, in which the stables might be placed. Like the castle, the *hôtel* had few internal or closed passages, and was served almost exclusively by spiral staircases.

Though the resemblance of a town mansion of the fifteenth century to a contemporary castle is considerable, it is just possible that the main feature of its plan—the arrangement of the rooms round internal courts partly surrounded by porticoes—may descend in a direct line from the Roman type of house, which was to be found with slight modifications in all parts of the empire, not excluding the thoroughly Latinised provinces of Gaul, and which probably survived the Roman domination. In the absence of any examples from the intervening centuries, the point cannot be decided one way or the other.

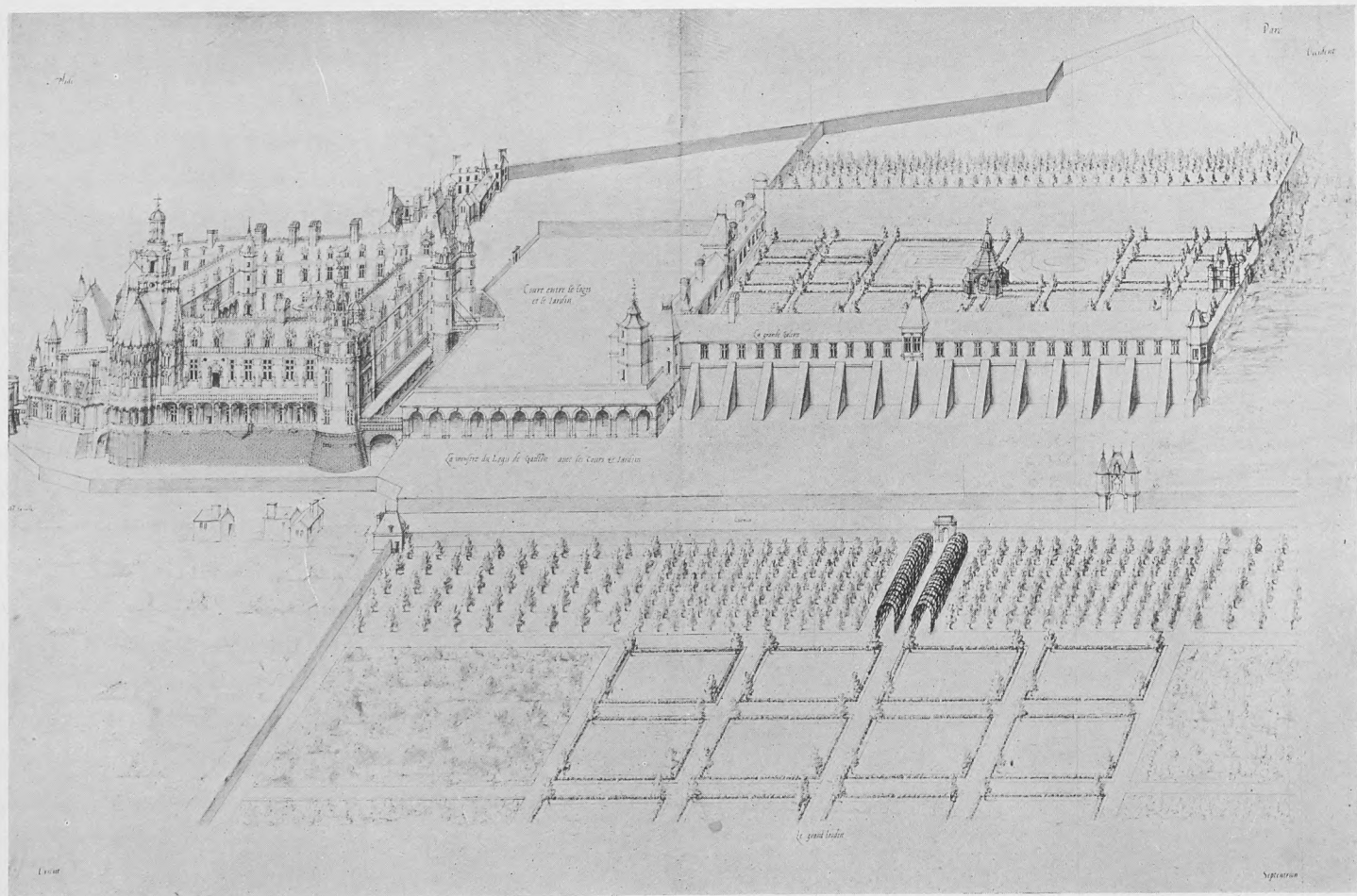
It was within the safe shelter of the walls of Bourges, and between 1443 and 1450, a time when that city was the second capital of the kingdom, that Jacques Cœur built the great mansion illustrated



in the following pages. As the home of a civilian and a cultured and travelled man of affairs, who had amassed the greatest fortune in France, it attained, as might be expected, a standard of splendour and comfort in advance of that to be found in most contemporary castles, where military considerations and the rudeness of feudal manners came into play. Although the plan had to be adapted to peculiar conditions, the site being in an outer angle of the Roman city, including three of its towers and a portion of its wall, the unknown architect made such skilful use of his materials that he achieved a most commodious arrangement of the various departments of a great house, each with separate approach and a complete system of inter-communication such as can hardly be paralleled in any other known house till the seventeenth century (Fig. VII).

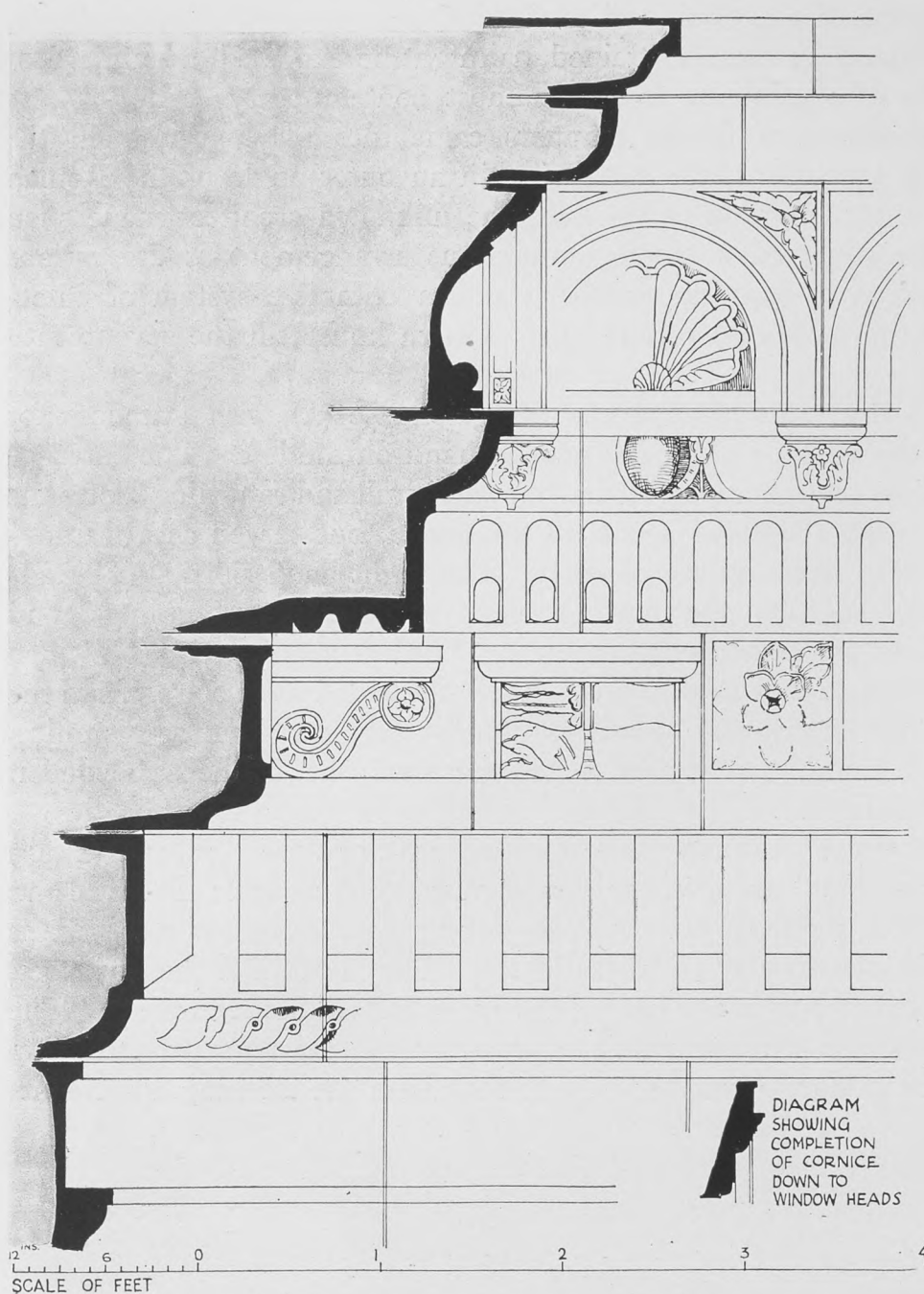
Approximately, at the centre of the street front stands the gatehouse (A), with entrances for vehicles and foot passengers, and the porter's lodge (D) near at hand on the left. The entrance opens on either side into open porticoes (B, C) running along the screen wall and returning along the sides of the court. These not only gave covered access to the house, but served as a waiting-place for the humble pensioners who lived on its bounty. The right-hand portico (C) leads to the kitchen offices (I, N), which occupy the north-western angle of the buildings, and have their own yard (H), with a separate tradesmen's entrance (G). The left-hand portico (B), which opened on to a side court (F) containing a well-head, leads to a self-contained suite of rooms in the south-west angle (P, O), which may not improbably have been used by Jacques Cœur as his office. Adjoining this is the great hall (K), communicating by a passage with the kitchens beyond it and by a trap-door with the cellar below.

On the upper floor, over the gateway, is the chapel (A'), opening into two closed galleries (B', C') over the porticoes. Galleries such as these are a feature found in many of the later mediæval and most Renaissance mansions, and served perhaps, primarily, for taking exercise in bad weather, as well as for receptions, and, later, for the display of works of art. They lead, like the porticoes, to separate suites situated in the further angles and having the upper hall (R) between them. The south-west set of rooms (T, T), which is self contained, is probably the master's private suite, conveniently near his office, while the north-west set (S, S, S) contained the sleeping apartments



VIII.—THE CHATEAU DE GAILLON, FROM A DRAWING BY J. A. DU CERCEAU.





IX.—CHATEAU DE BLOIS : CORNICE OF FRANCIS I WING.

decoration by other examples. The Hôtel de Cluny in Paris, for instance, built in 1490, and so well known as a museum (Fig. VI), is a rich specimen of late Gothic architecture, but owing to the fact that it was merely the *pied-à-terre* of provincial ecclesiastics, *i.e.*, the town house of the Abbots of Cluny, and not the permanent residence of a family, is far less complete in its arrangements. It exhibits, however, some typical features of the French house plan, *e.g.*, the screen wall along the street pierced by the great gate, the open portico running from the porter's lodge to the main building, and the latter placed opposite the entrance between the court and the garden.

In spite of the disappearance of so many of the great houses and all the royal palaces of the Middle Ages, we possess in the examples we have been considering such favourable specimens that we may feel assured we know the best that the mediæval architects could produce in the way of domestic accommodation, though we can form but a pale idea of the beauty of their internal decoration from the fragments and descriptions that remain to us.

A study of them reveals certain common characteristics. The chief of these is perhaps the absence of a general scheme of planning, completely thought out as a whole and controlled by æsthetic intentions. Convenience, as it was then understood, is indeed aimed at, but achieved only in somewhat piecemeal fashion, and only so far as military and other considerations, such as the accidents of the locality, would permit. No total artistic effect is sought, and regularity and symmetry hardly enter at all into the scheme of design; but much beauty of a

of the rest of the family. The spacious attics doubtless provided sleeping accommodation for the servants; and the roof timbers still show traces of the arrangements for dividing them up into cubicles by means of hangings. Each department of the house is provided with its privy, and with its own staircase communicating with the corresponding rooms on other floors. Thus the chapel can be reached direct from the entrance, the family suite from the servants' department, the master's private suite from the office and the upper hall from the lower, this stair being, as is fit, the largest and most richly decorated in the house, and forming the central feature of the court. These staircases, in addition, can, in most cases, be entered direct from the court, and are, it almost goes without saying, spiral and open to the air.

The Hôtel Jacques Cœur represents the culmination of mediæval house architecture as regards completeness of planning, though it is rivalled in the elaboration of the treatment of its elevations and

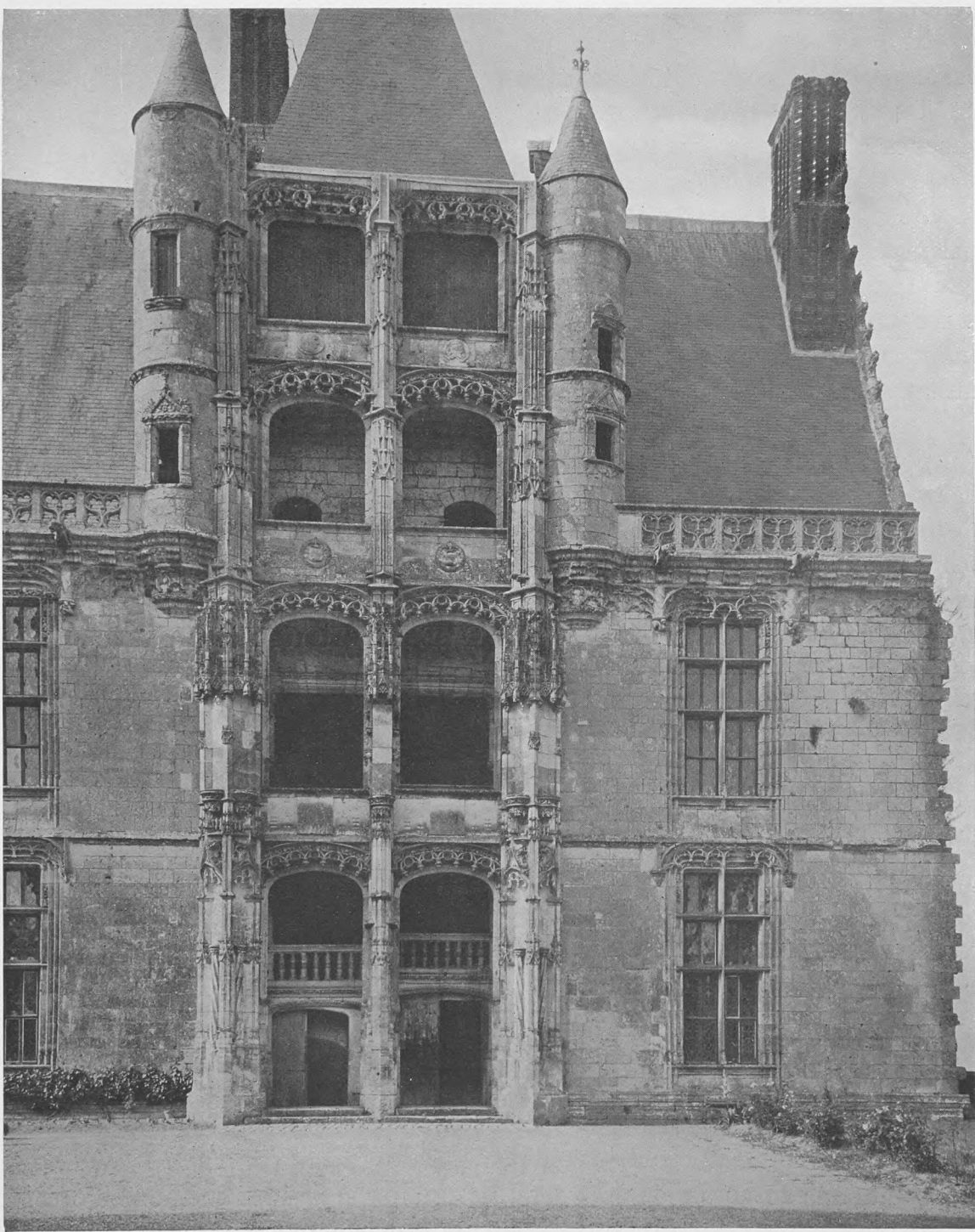


romantic order results from half-accidental effects produced by the grouping together, in accordance with practical requirements, of buildings, now stern and massive, as the insecurity of the times demanded, now richly adorned where security was assured.

Even before the middle of the fifteenth century, however, domestic architecture in France was beginning to show some signs of being affected by that great transformation of thought and social life which is compendiously described as the Renaissance. The vigorous but narrow civilisation built on the ruins of the ancient world by the strenuous spiritual and physical activity of the Middle Ages was working round once more to the conditions of the broader, fuller civilisation of antiquity and restoring the intellect to its due share in the scheme of life.

The effects of the Renaissance upon architecture may be classed under four heads, two of which are the results of social, political, or religious causes, the remaining two of a change in æsthetic outlook. In the former category are, first, the abandonment of things of definitely mediæval origin, such as private fortification—rendered useless by the growth of national monarchies and the invention of artillery—and of the system of rib vaulting, with its concomitant, the pointed arch, which had been worked out to its fullest consequences in church architecture, and had no further application in the new secular order. Second, in the same category, comes

the demand for greater convenience and comfort, for cheerfulness of aspect and for light and air which accompanied the increase of security and prosperity. In the category of æsthetic changes is the trend in design towards spaciousness, breadth and repose, towards horizontality and regularity, which began to make itself felt in various countries about the same time independently of classical influence. Finally, the humanistic colour which the Renaissance acquired from its re-discovery of the art and literature of antiquity so cognate to its own ideals



X.—CHATEAUDUN: LONGUEVILLE WING AND GREAT STAIR FROM THE COURT.



showed itself in architecture by the tendency to turn to the monuments of Rome for inspiration. The movement originated in Italy as a reversion to national traditions, but such was the admiration created by the brilliance of Italian art at its zenith that it gradually spread to other countries through the influence of travellers who had visited Italy and of Italian artists engaged by foreign patrons. Of this last and, superficially, most characteristic effect of the Renaissance—the influence of classic architecture—our examples have hitherto shown no trace. But of the more general ones they already afford instances. The striving after commodious arrangements has already been dwelt upon. The demand for light and air is fully satisfied by ample fenestration, not only in every part of the town house of Jacques Cœur, but also in the castle of Langeais, where, as already pointed out, the outer walls are as freely pierced with windows as the inner. Even in the midst of the marked verticality and exuberance of flamboyant Gothic, signs are not wanting of a tendency towards something broader and more restful. Thus, in the over-elaborate Palais de Justice at Rouen, the depressed arches and flat-headed windows illustrate the gradual substitution of the lintel and unbroken curve for the pointed forms hitherto almost universal. Again, in the mansion at Bourges, which shares these characteristics, both the court and street fronts have a strong element of horizontality in their bold cornices and running friezes of panelling, while its porticoes exhibit a new breadth and regularity of setting out. Of strict regularity and symmetry of planning we have as yet no examples, though it was not unknown in mediæval architecture. The royal castles of the Louvre and Vincennes, for instance, and that of Villandraut in Guienne, all built on flat sites, are symmetrically laid out. But this fact was due, it would seem, rather to the absence of any practical reason for departing from symmetry than from any preference for the principle on its own merits; indeed, symmetry was seldom absolute and was more apparent in the plan than in the elevations, where approximately similar rather than identical features balanced one another.

The series of invasions of Italy inaugurated by Charles VIII in 1494, and continued for half a century, brought Frenchmen for the first time into close contact with Italian art, then in its fullest radiance, and the admiration for the wonders there seen begot a widespread desire for imitation. With this object in view, many, from the King downward, engaged Italians to come and work for them at home. Charles VIII himself founded a colony of Italian artists at Amboise, whose influence spread in many directions, but particularly along the valley of the Loire, then the favourite resort of the Court, and into the Ile de France and Normandy. Charles' example was followed, on an even greater scale, by Francis I, when Fontainebleau became the chief centre of Italian activity. The colony of Amboise comprised two or three architects, who, apart from works of engineering, seem to have been employed in a general consultative capacity, but to have had but imperfect control over the execution of their designs, which were, for the most part, worked out by Frenchmen trained in the Gothic tradition. More numerous were craftsmen of various kinds—sculptors in stone and wood, joiners and inlayers, painters and workers in metal and terra-cotta—who were employed to decorate the exteriors and interiors of buildings often entirely traditional in their general character.

There are many instances extant of the curious mingling of elements which resulted from these conditions, and they are well represented among our twenty-five houses. At Amboise itself so much has been destroyed and so much altered or restored away that few vestiges remain of Charles VIII's works, so praised by contemporaries for their magnificence; but the great round towers built in his time still show, by their semicircular-headed windows, their graded ascents for litters and horses, and a few minor details, that Italians were concerned in their design.

In Louis XII's wing at Blois, finished in 1503, an Italian egg-and-tongue moulding makes its appearance in the rich cornice of the stair tower and the candelabrum ornament on the piers of the arcade (Figs. IX and 203); at Château d'O in the loggia, built in 1505, the columns are panelled, and decorated with light arabesques, and they blossom above into a dim semblance of Corinthian capitals (Fig. 143); at Josselin, in the façades finished before 1511, the Gothic tracery of a balustrade shades off into scrollwork, and that of another is formed into the letters of the Rohan motto, A PLUS (Figs. 115 and 116). The archiepiscopal residence of Gaillon (Fig. VIII),

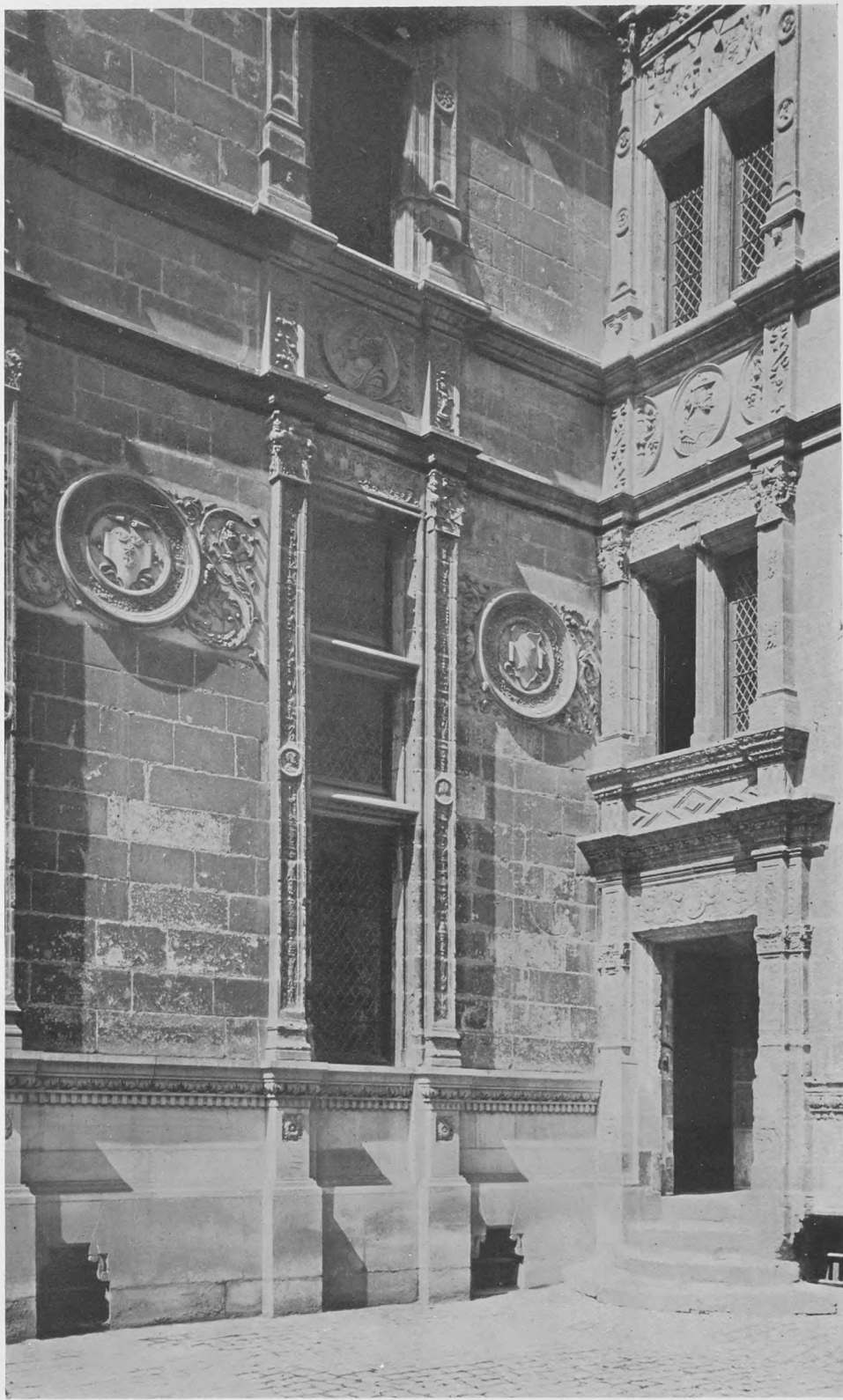




XI.—STAIRCASE AT CHATEAUDUN.



now for the most part destroyed, is another striking example of this transitional manner. By the time Francis I came to the throne in 1515 the movement had gone further. The French builders had, for the most part, learnt the trick of the Italian decorators, and if nothing very similar, as a whole, to Italian palazzi was built, and the general aspect at a distance of a French château or hôtel was much what it had been any time the last fifty years, a closer inspection would reveal vast changes. The towers and pinnacles, the steep roofs, massive



XII.—HOTEL PINCE ANGERS.

chimneys and high dormers, the tall mullioned windows, the spiral stairs, the gatehouses and moats all remained, it is true, but all were by this time clad in a flowered robe of Italian embroidery. Each feature and each detail was transformed into something nearly resembling its old form, but conceived in another spirit. The pointed arch has disappeared, the sections of the mouldings are of a classical type, angular shafts are replaced by flat pilasters, gables by pediments, crockets by dolphins and *putti*, flying buttresses by scrolls, pinnacles by vases and candelabra and fleur-de-lys. Instead of horizontal bands of Gothic paneling we have entablatures; instead of balustrades of Gothic tracery we have pierced scrollwork interspersed with balusters, lettering, or emblematic beasts. Niche heads are formed like scallop shells, and the panels on walls and piers are enlivened with dainty arabesques.

Francis I's buildings at Blois—those which occupy the right side of the court as one enters—illustrate admirably this stage of French architecture. Its upper windows have mullions and transoms, with flat panelled faces ornamented with circles and lozenges, and the range of little shell niches

of the elaborate cornice which crowns it gives it a semblance of machicolations. The drawing by Mr. A. T. Bolton (Fig. ix) shows its section and detail. This feature appears again in two different forms at Valençay. At Azay-le-Rideau and Le Lude the machicolations are more definitely retained, and above them is a *chemin de ronde* of the old type connecting the towers. The most striking thing about Francis' building at Blois—its great staircase—is the most complete example of traditional design in a new dress. For apart from its decorative treatment,



this staircase shows hardly any deviation from the usual mediæval practice. Like most mediæval stairs, which from their form were known as "vis," it runs spirally round a central newel inside a tower with unglazed openings. Like the stair at Châteaudun (Figs. x and xi), built some years earlier, it has several tiers of mouldings winding spirally round the newel, which, above the handrail, is ornamented with a little arcade, but it differs from that example and the Louis XII stair at Blois in that its tower is octagonal—the more usual form—and not square. The steps are carried on arches, or rather vaults, as was the case in the great staircase of the Louvre built in the fourteenth century and destroyed in the seventeenth. In so highly decorated a feature it is natural that the undersides of the step should not be neglected, hence the rather unusual feature of longitudinal ribs following the line of the spiral.

In two points there appear to be innovations. One is the introduction of balustraded balconies on the outer faces of the tower. These naturally follow the slope of the ascent, though they are made a little less steep in order to render them more comfortable as a standing place for the guard, but incidentally giving a certain awkwardness to the elevations which the rich delicacy of the carved decoration cannot conceal. The other is that the outline of the treads of the step is curved somewhat in the same way as the lip of a shell, a point which may well have been suggested to the designer by the general and inevitable resemblance of a spiral stair to a spiral shell. This curvilinear treatment of the step had little contemporary following, but was to reappear two centuries later in the curiously different setting of rococo design. During the sixteenth century the spiral stair was gradually superseded by the stair with parallel straight flights separated by a wall, an early instance of which is found at Azay-le-Rideau (Fig. xv), and a more imposing one at the Louvre, while Cheverny offers one from the early seventeenth century (Fig. 349). In such cases the central wall takes the place of the central newel in carrying one end of the steps, for French builders had not yet grasped the possibility of supporting them from the wall only. Philibert de l'Orme was perhaps the first to do this at the Tuileries, and after him this method gradually became general.

One of the most obvious traits of the châteaux of this period is that their windows are arranged one above the other in vertical lines, with panels between the top of one window and the sill of the one above it, while a framework of pilasters binds them together into a single feature, generally terminating in a rich and lofty "lucarne." This may be seen clearly in the illustrations of Le Lude and Azay-le-Rideau and in Fig. xii. Viollet-le-Duc in his *Dictionnaire* states that the reason for this practice was that in altering old fortresses to let in light on the outer faces it was found more practical not to pierce holes in each storey for the new windows, but to slit the towers or walls from top to bottom and to fill up the gash with new work, adding pilasters to disguise the joint. But he quotes no example of this having actually been done, and it is perhaps only one of those ingenious theories in which the alert French mind is so fertile. Certain it is that the arrangement already occurs in Gothic buildings where no such alteration has taken place. At Langeais and at Loches (Figs. 125 and 107) the windows are in vertical lines, but not interconnected, and at Maintenon may be seen a *croisée* with a panel below it inserted over the gateway when the slots for the drawbridge chains were built up. But in the court of the Hôtel Jacques Cœur (Fig. 89), on the turrets of the Château d'O (Fig. 137) and the stair tower at Montreuil-Bellay (Fig. 152), the two things are combined: the vertical range of openings is framed in between shafts carrying pinnacles, and the spaces between the openings are filled with panels of blind tracery.



XIII.—HOTEL D'ARMAGNAC RODEZ.



In some of the Renaissance châteaux, as, for instance, at Blois, Chambord, Valençay, Le Lude, the pilasters are not confined to this use of framing the windows, but also used to divide up the wall spaces, and their entablatures run as continuous string-courses round the building. And often the panels of walling thus formed are enriched with a central ornament, like the medallions at Le Lude and the salamanders at Blois.

Sometimes carved decoration was extended to the whole surface of the walls. And it is in the richness of such a treatment that lies the principal interest, from the architectural standpoint, of the only early Renaissance town house included in our series of twenty-five. This is the Hôtel Bourgheroulde at Rouen—a building of various periods, whose original arrangements are somewhat obliterated by subsequent alterations. The part most richly treated



XIV.—HOUSE OF PIERRE JAYET, PARAY-LE-MONIAL.

with decorative sculpture, representing the Field of the Cloth of Gold, is the left wing, consisting of an arcaded gallery added between 1520 and 1532 to connect the older front and back blocks. The main block at the back is an example of late fifteenth century Gothic, whose walls and buttresses were carved as an afterthought with Renaissance arabesques and a variety of subjects probably between 1532 and 1547. They comprise the phoenix of Eleanor of Austria who married Francis I in 1530 (see Chap. XII). The accompanying illustrations represent two smaller contemporary town houses of the single block type without courtyard. The first (Fig. XIV) is the house built by Pierre Jayet, or Jaillet, at Paray-le-Monial (1525-8). The second (Fig. XIII), a sketch by Mr. Bolton, is the so-called Hôtel d'Armagnac at Rodez, with upper stories boldly corbelled out over the street.

The cheerfulness of the castles, to which the opening up of numerous windows looking out on to the country so greatly contributed, was further increased at the time of the Renaissance by providing them on their outer faces with terraces and arcaded loggias such as had previously been confined to the courts, to allow the inmates to take the air and enjoy the prospect. One of these was built by the Cardinal of Amboise at Gaillon. Others are found at Chambord, while at Blois the three superposed galleries, which produce so striking an effect on the north front, were added successively as afterthoughts.

The effect of the Renaissance upon plans is seen principally in the direction of rectangular arrangement of the courts and closer attention to symmetry. This is necessarily most marked in wholly new buildings. At Azay-le-Rideau (Fig. xv) the building is L-shaped; but that the court was intended to be, and perhaps was, enclosed by a screen or curtain wall is clear from the fact that the *chemin de ronde* is omitted from the re-entering façades, which are rather more richly decorated than the outer ones. The careful setting out of the elevations and the symmetrical spacing of windows, as Mr. Cook points out, betray the hand of a practised



designer. Whether he was a master-mason who had enjoyed unusual opportunities and made good use of them, or, more definitely, an architect like Boccador, is a question of little moment.

The château of Bury, near Blois, built about 1515 by Florimond Robertet, Finance Minister under Louis XII and his successor, offers a typical example of a plan symmetrised under Renaissance influence (Fig. xvii). Here we have the screen loggia in front, with its central gate-house, higher wings on each side of the square court and the principal block at the back with circular towers at the external angles. The gardens are in two walled pleasaunces at the back, and the stables and farm buildings in a walled basecourt at the side.

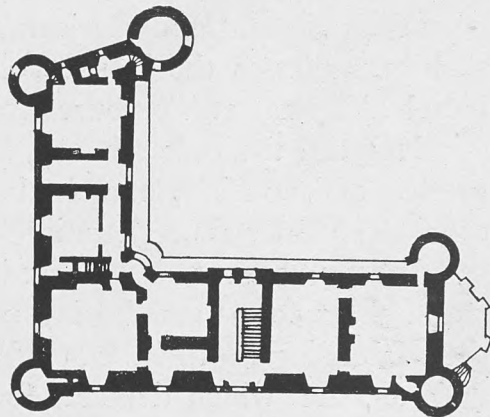
Valençay is a château of typically François Premier style, with no trace of the more mature Renaissance manner, and quite unlike the works of Philibert de l'Orme, to whom it has been rather casually attributed. The plan, however, which was never completed, is a somewhat unusual one. The entrance is placed in the main building, which thus forms the front of the court instead of the back, while the screen, or, rather, the balustraded terrace which does duty for it, divides the court from the garden. The court is, however, normal for the period in other respects, enclosed between three ranges of buildings at right angles, with cylindrical towers at the external angles. This at least looks as if it had been the intention, but the wing on the left of the court is lacking, and the right wing was so much enlarged in the seventeenth century that it became the most important part of the mansion, and usurped the place of the central block. The handsome balustrade which takes the place of the screen, many of the dormers and probably the domical roofs of the towers, are also of this period. But thoroughly in the character of the earlier work is the massive and stately pavilion, a clear reminiscence of the mediæval donjon, which occupies the central position (Chap. XXIII).

The plan of that "folly" *par excellence*, Francis I's ruinous caprice of Chambord, approaches more nearly to the usual type, though, like Valençay, it possesses a donjon. But here the donjon is expanded till it nearly fills the court, and the forward halves of the wings are carried up no higher than the screen building, which in this case contains dwelling-rooms, and the front towers were never carried up to their full height. The donjon, or central block, of Chambord is provided, in addition, with massive cylindrical towers at its angles, and contains a cross-shaped hall on each floor, in the centre of which is the celebrated double spiral stair—the first example, perhaps, of a staircase protected from the weather. It is noticeable that, as indicated in his model, Boccador had intended straight flights, but was overruled in favour of the more familiar winding plan.

In regard to the more detailed arrangements of the châteaux of the sixteenth century there is little of real advance in planning to be chronicled. In fact, the claims for symmetry were sometimes allowed to outbalance those of convenience, and it was not till the following century that architects satisfactorily solved the problem of reconciling them, nor was there any improvement in means of intercommunication beyond that provided by more frequent external galleries. The apartments consist of two main elements—the halls (in which term may be included the closed galleries) and the suites of private rooms.

The hall is not of the same paramount importance in the plan of the French mansion as it is in that of the English. In our sixteenth and early seventeenth century houses the hall, with its screens dividing it from the buttery and kitchen, is a dominant and invariable factor in the plan. In France it was already customary, even in mediæval times, to have two, or even more, halls—*salles*—sometimes used for different purposes. Luxury, as it was understood at the Renaissance, tended to multiply them yet further, without, however, strictly specialising their use beyond allotting some for summer and some for winter occupation. Nor was there any generally accepted system in the position assigned them in the plans as a whole or in relation to the rooms.

These, as was already the case at Pierrefonds and in Jacques Cœur's house, are grouped in suites, each consisting of one room of fair size (*chambre*), with one or more, usually two, and in some



XV.—AZAY-LE-RIDEAU : PLAN.



cases more than two, smaller rooms (*cabinets*) attached. The large room is primarily the bedroom of the lord or lady, in which stood the great state bed and visitors were received. It is often approached through an anteroom, where attendants would wait and sleep at night. Beyond the large room is often a smaller one, serving as a retiring-room, boudoir, study or dressing-room, and not infrequently as a private bedroom, more cosy than the great chamber, which thus, though still containing the state bed, became associated almost exclusively with ceremonial uses, and came to be known as *chambre de parade*. An almost necessary adjunct was a cabinet used for the bestowal of the wardrobe, and sometimes for placing a movable convenience to avoid the discomfort of resorting to the more sanitary, but draughty, privy situated at some distance. This system of rooms grouped in suites remained in use for several centuries, and formed the raw material out of which both the stately plans of the seventeenth and the more comfortable ones of the eighteenth centuries were worked up.

Through the influence of the later Italian artists employed by Francis I, especially at Fontainebleau, and the growing practice for French architects to study in Italy, that more advanced type of Renaissance architecture, the Roman or Palladian phase, began to gain ground towards the middle of the sixteenth century. At the same time, the trained professional architect began to supersede the master-mason, with his somewhat haphazard methods, as the designer of important buildings. Of this class were men like the Italians, Serlio and Primaticcio, and the Frenchmen, Pierre Lescot and Philibert de l'Orme. But while the Style François Premier is represented in the following pages by some of its finest examples, its successor, the Style Henri Deux, comes off less well in the matter of illustration. Anet and the Châtelet of Chantilly, Serrant and Kerjean are either fragmentary or of secondary merit, or both, and some such examples as the Louvre or Tuileries, the château of Ancy-le-Franc in Burgundy, or the Hôtel d'Assézat at Toulouse would be needed to give a proper idea of the merits of this stage.

Nor can the rather heavy, if in many ways charming and instructive, château of Cheverny, or that of Vaux le Vicomte, the immature work of an architect not the greatest of his day, be considered fully representative of the seventeenth century.

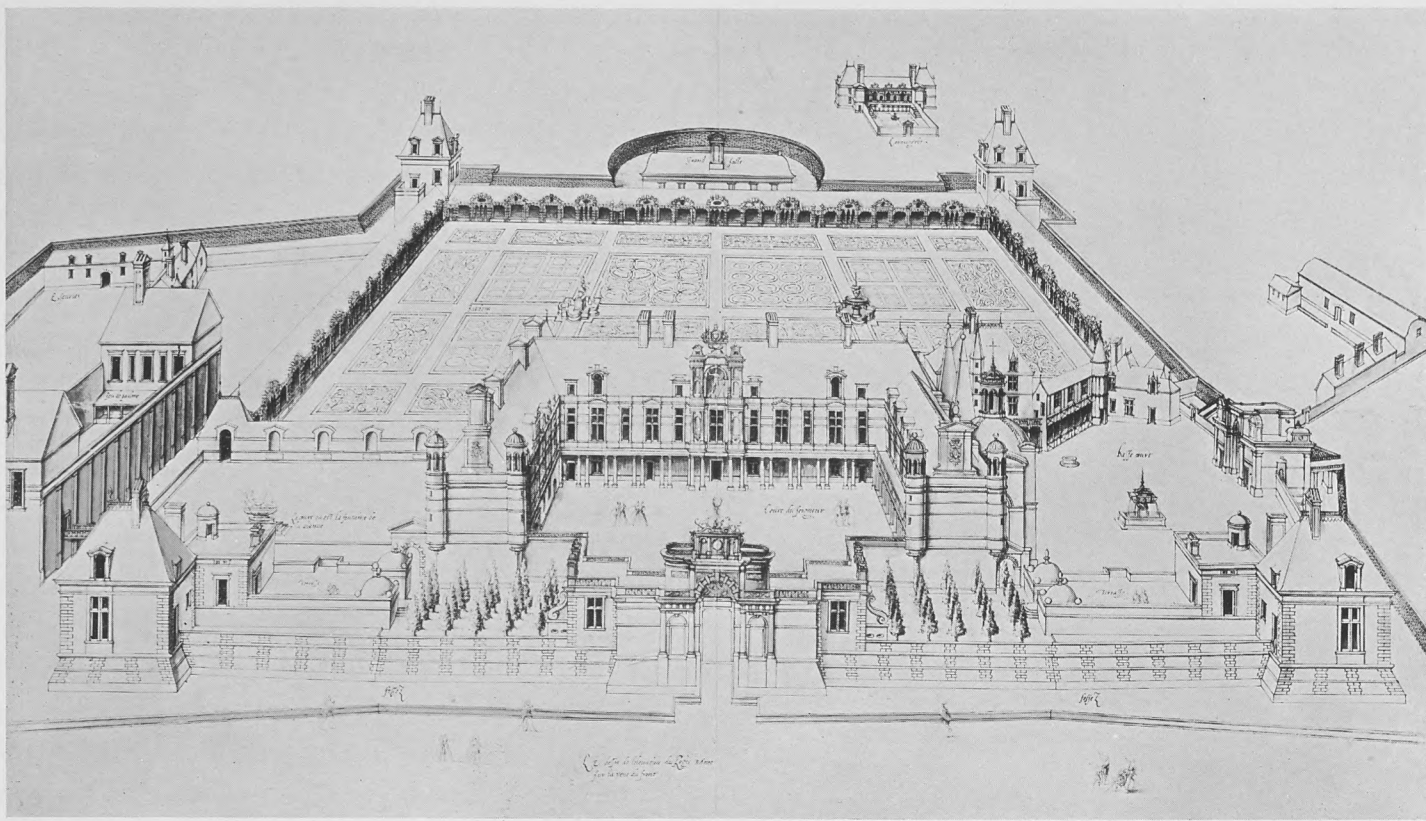
Indeed, it would seem that it is of set purpose that from about 1540 onwards Mr. Cook keeps us on short commons, fearing perhaps that if he provided a richer and more varied fare, such as the succeeding centuries can afford, we might be seduced from the architecture in which he most delights, that which depends for its interest mainly on its romantic aspects, its picturesqueness of grouping, the delicate design of individual features, the exquisitely wrought quality of ornament. These things in architecture are indeed sources of delight, but they are not the only sources, and a growing appreciation for those essentially architectonic qualities which the Renaissance prized, which it attained at once in Florence and consolidated in Rome, but which in France and England were reached only through a long labour of experiment and elimination, has been a marked feature of the present century.

The systematic thinking out of designs as a whole, the careful balancing of voids and solids, the disposal of masses in their right proportions and relations, the burning of the lamp of sacrifice, *i.e.* the rejection of the unessential, the use of rich ornament only for the emphasis of crucial points, and of fine detail only as the appropriate language for the expression of noble ideas—in a word, breadth and repose without dulness—these are qualities which the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in France were eminently well equipped to pursue and achieve, and a fair view of their achievements cannot be taken without consideration of the best works of such men as de Brosse and Le Mercier, the Mansarts and the Gabriels, to mention but the best-known names.

If, however, our specimens of the mature Renaissance are not the best possible for exhibiting it in the most favourable light, they are by no means contemptible, and illustrate many of its characteristics.

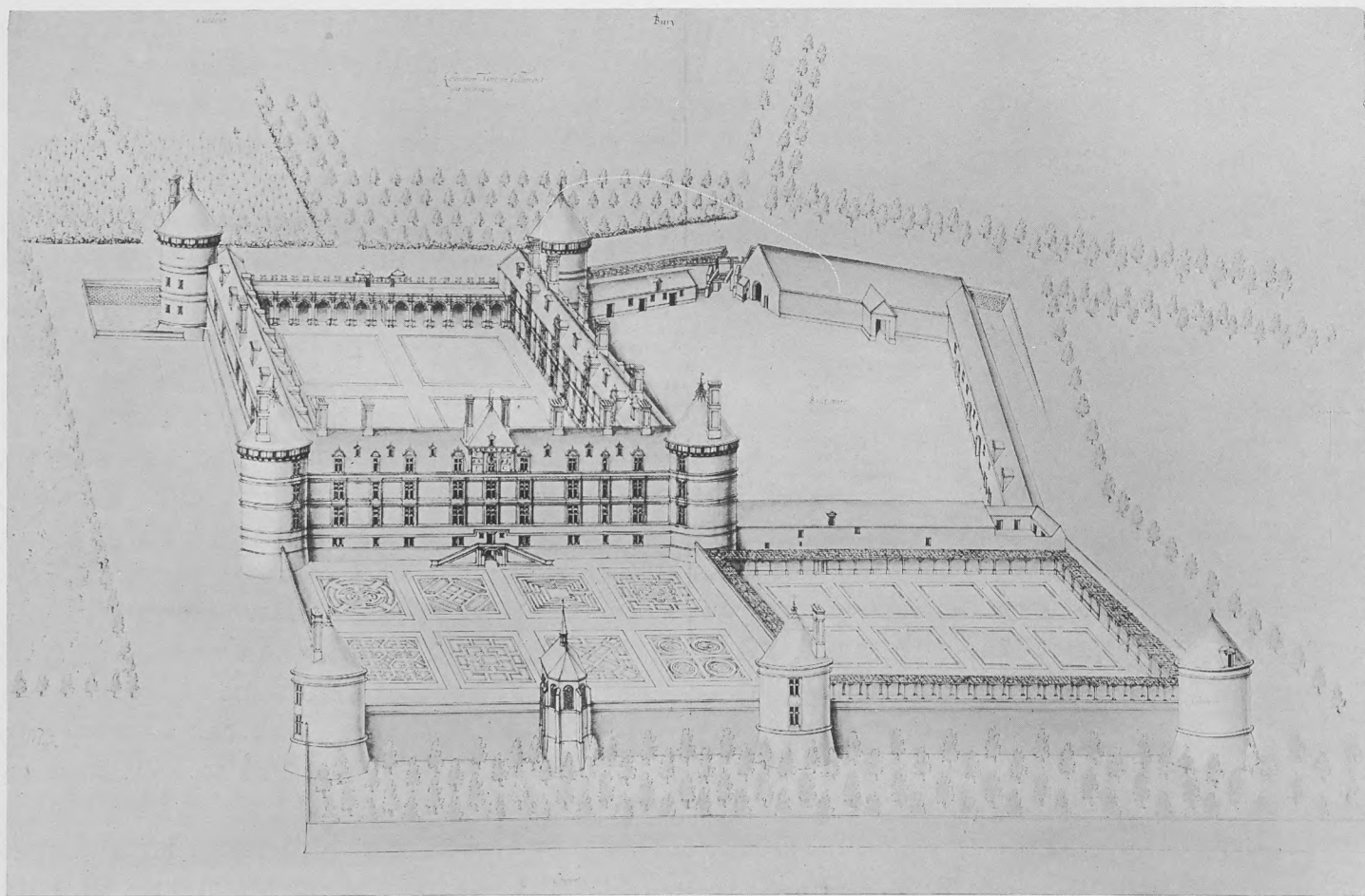
Serrant exhibits points of style which somewhat recall Philibert de l'Orme's manner, though there appears to be no evidence for his having been the architect. The original building of 1546 is conceived, so far as plan and general design are concerned, on the same semi-mediæval lines as Azay-le-Rideau or Chambord, but shows advance in the greater correction and simplicity of the classical features and the further elimination of mediæval ones. The machicolations





XVI.—THE CHATEAU OF ANET, FROM A DRAWING BY J. A. DU CERCEAU.

and allure are replaced by a cornice and balustrade ; the dormers and staircase bay end in quiet pediments instead of the fantastically outlined gables of Azay ; the pilasters are of recognisable classic types, and are no longer covered with minute arabesques as at Blois ; the roof shows a tranquil and dignified repose worlds removed from the wild chaos of the skyline at Chambord. In the following century this trend towards quietness of outline went further still, and we shall find the dormers disappearing altogether, and in some cases the steep roof as well, to be replaced by a balustraded flat, as had already been done much earlier at St. Germain.



XVII.—THE CHATEAU OF BURY, FROM A DRAWING BY J. A. DU CERCEAU.

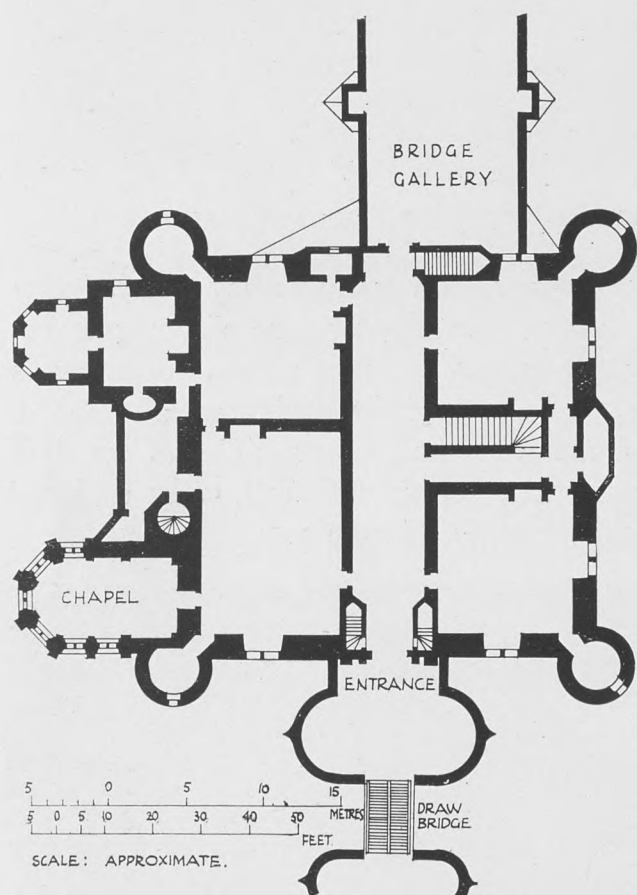


The plan of Serrant originally comprised a main building, with two short wings at right angles to it and round towers at the two external angles. Later alterations brought it to a type common in the seventeenth century, when it ceased to be usual to surround the quadrangle entirely with buildings. The court is prolonged beyond the ends of the wings, and the projecting portion is enclosed by a low screen with isolated blocks or lodges at the forward angles.

Anet, an undoubted work of Philibert de l'Orme, built between 1548 and 1553, is on a more extended scale, since it possesses lateral courts to right and left of the Cour d'Honneur. The screen in front of the latter is curiously elaborate in its plan, and culminates in an equally elaborate projecting gatehouse, which is connected by a mere parapet with lodges at the angles of the entire enclosure similar—on a smaller scale—to those just noticed at Serrant. The fact that the moat encircles not only the three courts, but also a large parterre, is a relic of the conditions of the mediæval fortress, in which pleasaunces or vegetable gardens, if they were to be of use during a siege, must to some extent be fortified. De l'Orme, whose knowledge of masonry and other practical sides of his profession was consummate, was also well versed in classical design, and, on the whole, he made a fine use of it, excelling particularly in the beauty

of his detail. The noble central feature, once at the back of the court, and now rebuilt in the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris (Fig. XIX), is, however, a favourable example of his composition, which is too often marred by fussy and extravagant features and by excessive ingenuities of construction. Another is the stately bridge at Chenonceaux, which he built to connect the house with the further bank of the river, and upon which other hands erected a gallery.

The châtelet, a small court added about 1550 to the earlier castle at Chantilly, is the work of a very remarkable architect, Jean Bullant, who, like de l'Orme, had studied in Italy. He was a man of big ideas, with a sense of stately scale, such as was commoner in the seventeenth century than the sixteenth, but he had not thoroughly mastered the grammar of classical design and was apt to use its forms, as in this instance, in a manner totally at variance with their intrinsic meaning and purpose. Much the same remark applies to the design of Kerjean, a product of the rather debased period of the Wars of Religion. But the architecture here has only the grotesque barbarism and little trace of the noble dignity which Bullant, with all his solecisms, never missed. Kerjean, however, is interesting



XVIII.—CHENONCEAUX: PLAN.

even in its fragmentary condition, because while it preserved intact the typical chateau plan with entrance screen and internal loggia, it shows the supersession of the round tower by the rectangular pavilion, which became general from the middle of the sixteenth century onwards.

The national reorganisation which in the reign of Henry IV followed the anarchy of a thirty years' civil war was accompanied by a time of sober, economical common-sense architecture, in which classical elements are latent rather than expressed, and in which large use is made of brickwork with stone coigns, and of stone rustication in combination with either brick or stone walling. Henry IV's own buildings, such as the Place Dauphine and Place des Vosges in Paris, are examples of this style in its more homely aspect, while the Luxembourg Palace shows it applied on a monumental scale. The buildings of this period are characterised by a certain excess of massiveness in their proportions which is enhanced by the frequent use of the square dome and the so-called Mansard roof with its broken slope. These characteristics, combined with profuse rustication, are well shown in the Château of Cheverny, built in 1634. Its long white garden front (Fig. xx), a somewhat over-flattering appreciation of which is

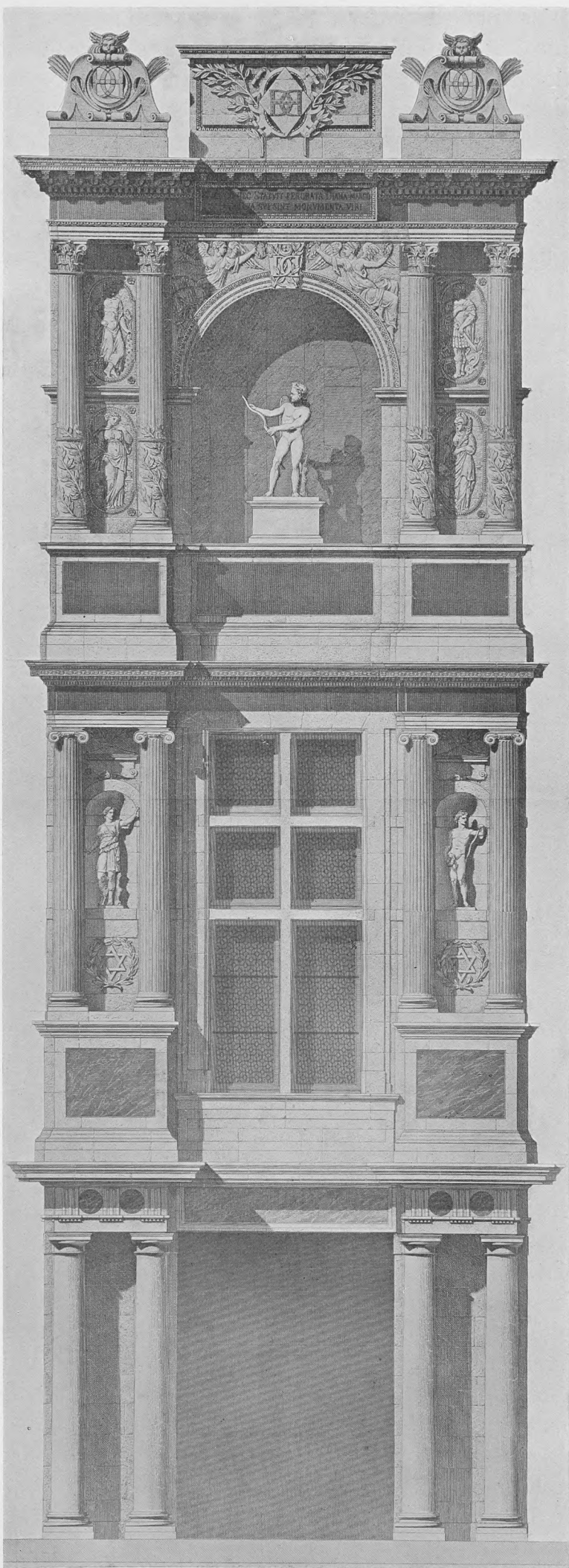


quoted by Mr. Cook from Mr. Henry James, has a certain awkward charm of its own; but it is singularly infelicitous in its proportions, the central pavilion being too narrow for its important position, and the terminal ones, which are crushed under sprawling domes, too wide in relation to the connecting blocks.

Its other front shows the system of stone coigns typical of the period, employed to connect the windows in vertical lines instead of the pilasters of an earlier day, and the substitution of windows with wooden frames and casements for stone mullions with leaded lights, which became general about this time. These features are also illustrated in the accompanying view of the château of Clermont-sur-Loire (Fig. XXII). Mr. Cook admits Cheverny to his collection expressly on the ground of its containing some smouldering embers of the dying fire of the Renaissance, such as the carved stone garlands on the staircase, and the open timber ceiling and shutters with small panels of the guard-room, with their rather minute polychrome decoration (see Chap. XXIV).

These points are, indeed, interesting survivals in an age when the scale of features and their decoration was being enhanced to harmonise with that of the building. This change may be appreciated from a study of the decoration of the royal bedchamber, where door and chimney-piece and ceiling each consists of a few bold divisions.

The chimney-piece, apart from its bold scale, is interesting as showing the abandonment of the top-heavy, overhanging mantels of the previous century, and in taking its place more definitely as a part of the room and as a frame to an opening of moderate size. That the staircase is in straight flights goes without saying. But in two points it is of a type rapidly going out of vogue. It still needs the support of piers and walls between its flights, and it occupies the whole centre of the building. Stairs from this time onwards are carried with the support of only one wall, and have open balustrades of marble, or more often of metal. They are also removed from the central position to one or both sides,

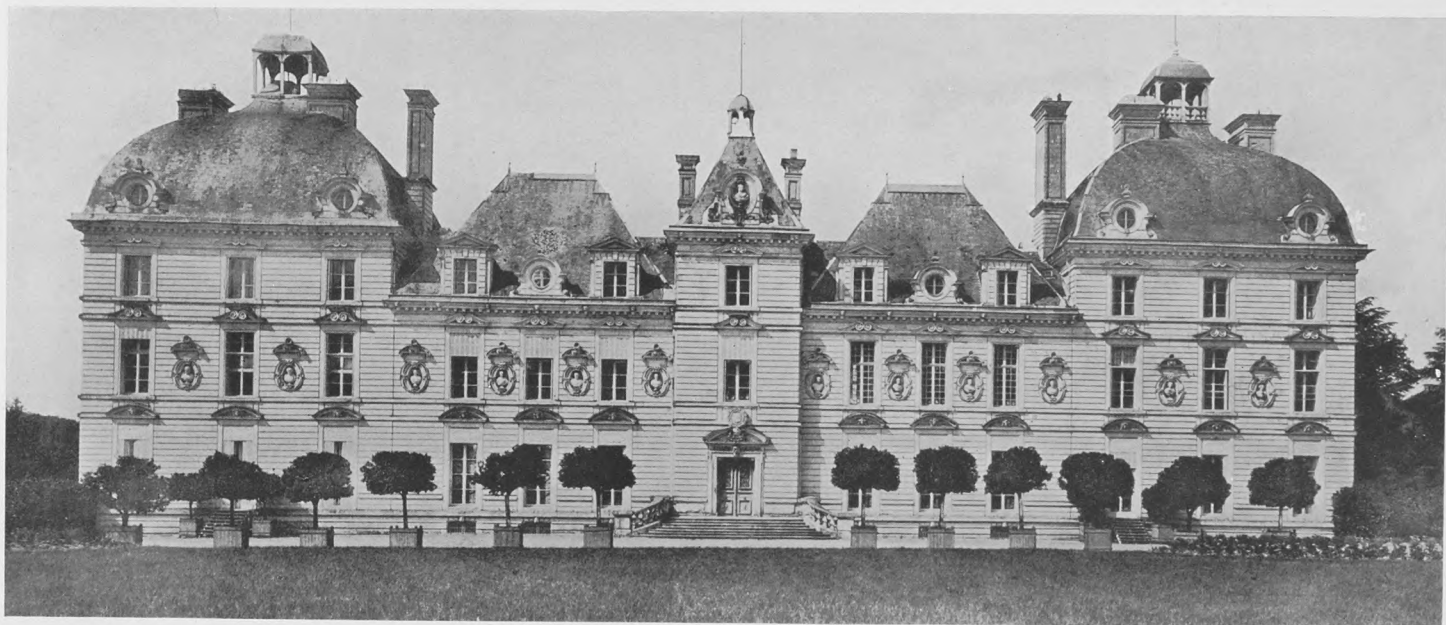


XIX.—ANET: ENTRANCE BAY IN ÉCOLE DES BEAUX ARTS, PARIS.



so as not to interrupt the continuous suite of apartments on the main garden front. Our last example, Vaux le Vicomte, shows an extreme instance of this practice, the stairs being relegated to an excessively subordinate position and treated with insufficient dignity. Though Vaux le Vicomte is surpassed by later works of Le Vau himself, and is inferior to those of his elder contemporary, François Mansart, it may yet serve as a type both of the stately mansion of the age of Louis XIV and of that splendid school of domestic classical architecture which is one of the glories of the seventeenth century. The development of this school may be traced in stages of ever increasing perfection, from Salomon de Brosse's somewhat sombre Luxembourg, built for Maria de' Medici (1615-24), through Le Mercier's grandiose lay-out at Richelieu for the great Cardinal (1627-37), and François Mansart's austere majestic block at Blois for Gaston of Orleans (1635-40), till it reaches almost unsurpassable harmony and refinement of expression in his Château de Maisons (1642-51) and the Hôtel Carnavalet, remodelled by him in 1662.

Of this noble series, the only glimpse we get in the following pages is one of the Orleans wing at Blois (Fig. 224). This majestic fragment has suffered greatly in public estimation through the knowledge that Gaston intended to pull down the whole of the earlier buildings to make room for its completion. Its austere beauties are not of a character to compete for popularity, in an age in love with romantic incidents, with the playfulness and exuberance of



XX.—CHATEAU DE CHEVERNY: GARDEN FRONT.

Francis I's work, and for nigh on a century they fell into undeserved neglect and contempt, from which at length they are coming to their own in the admiration of the discerning.

Vaux le Vicomte, although a poor second to this masterpiece, and devoid of its masterly handling and sureness of proportion, is, however, no mean example of its type. For, apart from certain faults, it is, on the whole, an impressive and stately pile, well suited for the diversions of the most sumptuous and urbane court in Europe. The most glaring of these faults lie in the awkward lines of the elliptical dome and in the lack of relation between the central features with their double tiers of short columns and the end pavilions with their giant pilasters running through two storeys. To the portions of the building where it occurs the Giant Order gives a noble dignity of scale, which is its complete justification, and which is also finely exemplified in the seventeenth century wing at Valençay.

The general lay-out of Vaux is one of the completest and most impressive now in existence in France. The forecourt, screened by a great *grille*, and flanked on either side by basecourts of monumental architecture containing stables, kennels and orangeries, is bounded at the back by the moat, which encircles the Court of Honour, and is the sole relic of the traditions of military defence. A stone bridge spans the moat and leads on to a balustraded enclosure, while the façade of the château proper closes the vista. Similarly the opposite façade, with its terrace and bridge, forms the culmination of a splendid scheme of formally laid-out grounds.



The house no longer embraces the court in long, extended wings, but is concentrated into a single block with angle pavilions of relatively slight projection, and exhibits considerable advance in internal planning. It is one of the earliest examples of "double building"—that is, instead of containing in its thickness only one range of rooms lit from both faces, it has two parallel ranges each lit from one side only, thus gaining better protection from atmospheric conditions and greater ease of intercommunication (Fig. XXI).

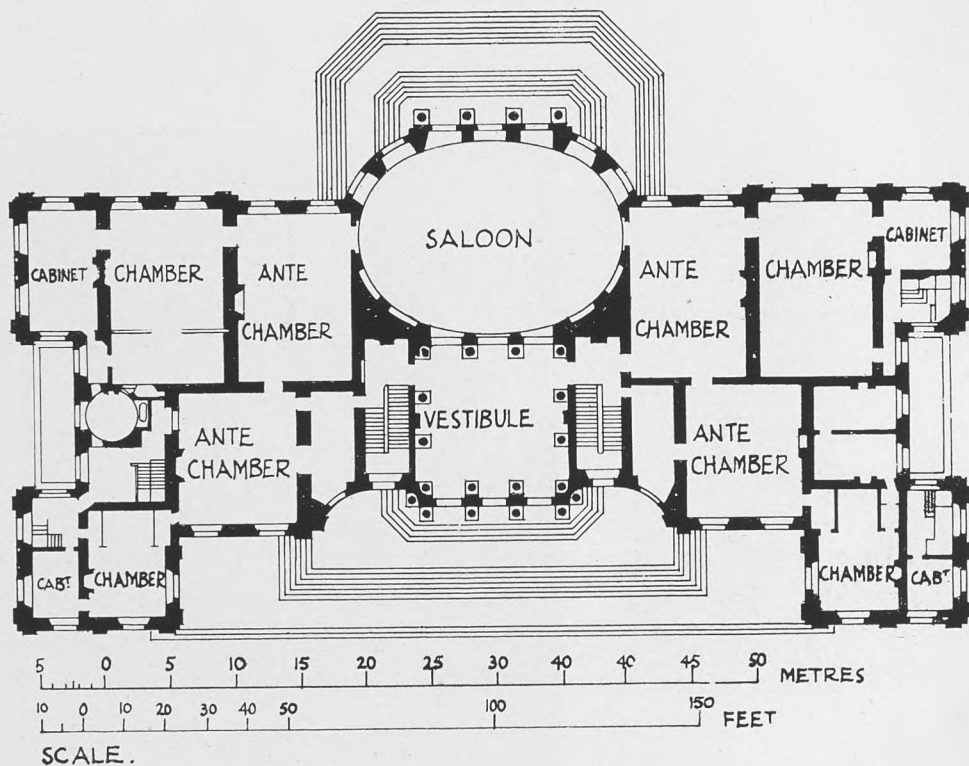
The compact arrangement of the plan at Vaux le Vicomte permits of four self-contained suites, each comprising antechamber, chamber, cabinet, wardrobe and private stair. The fact that the great stair is no longer central and open to the air, as it was even in so recent and luxurious a house as Le Vau's Hôtel Lambert de Thorigny in Paris, but duplicated, and placed in separate closed halls on each side of the entrance, permits of a dignified vestibule, through which the great elliptical saloon is approached, while all the rooms on the garden front, of which this apartment forms the centre, are capable on state occasions of being thrown open *en suite*.

The principles of compact planning, combining the maximum of convenience and comfort with courtly stateliness, which are so well illustrated at Vaux le Vicomte, were those which were to govern the domestic architecture of the succeeding age, and the eighteenth century added further improvements and refinements, such, for instance, as internal access corridors, not yet visible at Vaux. Since, however, our illustrations do not extend to later buildings, it is not possible to pursue these further developments in detail.

It is a far cry from the loop-holed walls of Pierrefonds, reared menacingly on a height, bristling with towers and machicolations, and gathered up in constant fear of attack into a close ring of defences, to Vaux le Vicomte, stretching the stately length of its pilastered and amply windowed fronts at ease in the plain among statues and fountains and trimmed boskages.

But one is the lineal descendant of the other. Changes have been wrought from time to time to meet the changing ideas and modes of life of succeeding generations, and each form assumed by baronial homes is fraught with suggestions for the future while bound by strong links to the past. So strong, indeed, is the hold of the past upon architectural development that generations, or even centuries, may elapse before improvements, which in the light of *post facto* knowledge appear obvious, are introduced, or before traditional arrangements whose *raison d'être* has long been forgotten are abandoned. Thus, not merely in the seventeenth century at Vaux le Vicomte, but at Le Marais, built more than a hundred years later, a moat is still considered a desirable, if not an indispensable, adjunct to a country seat. Again, two such characteristics as "single building"—almost a necessity in a fortress because rooms were built on the inside of a curtain wall and could be lighted only from one side—and the absence of internal corridors—desirable in a fortress to impede the progress of an enemy—persisted almost universally, the first till the middle of the seventeenth century and the second for at least half a century longer.

Our illustrations are, with few exceptions, of country houses, and country house architecture has, therefore, been our main theme. But even if we had had contemporary examples of town mansions before us we should have few important divergences in their design to chronicle,



XXI.—VAUX LE VICOMTE : PLAN.



so greatly was the hôtel influenced by the château. In both cases the houses in question are those of great nobles or their imitators, and it might be interesting to speculate whether, under a less aristocratic *régime*, French architecture would have brought into general use refinements and conveniences of planning of which the house of a wealthy merchant of Bourges had already so much to show in the mid fifteenth century, and whether, in that case, we might not have missed much of that orderly stateliness and aristocratic distinction which is the outstanding contribution of the great country houses of France.

Be this as it may, the slowness of architectural evolution, surely advancing step by step, through the collaboration of innumerable workers, meeting new requirements by *ad hoc* improvements upon the legacies of tradition, and working ever in the light of the great past, may give pause to those who bid the architects of to-day turn their backs upon tradition and spin a new architecture out of sanitary science and ferro-concrete without its aid.



XXII.—CHATEAU OF CLERMONT-SUR-LOIRE.



CHAPTER I.

MONT ST. MICHEL, MANCHE.\*

IT has been sometimes maintained that the love of Nature and the appreciation of landscape were unknown either to the classical or the mediæval civilisations ; but it seems strange that men who depended so largely upon elemental causes for the very condition of their existence should have had a less sympathetic understanding of the world they lived in than can be found in modern generations who shape it to our will, who join the severed seas with our canals, who pierce the mountain barriers with our tunnels, who in the end almost despise that Nature with which Science has permitted us so much familiarity. It may well be that to the daring of the engineer should be allotted a share of the responsibility for some of the failures of modern architecture. For architecture is not a thing of man or of periods. Buildings are not beautiful because they are old, or detestable because they are new. The architectural relics of every age and every country admit of the application of certain principles of judgment that began when the first stone was laid upon its fellow, and will last until the fabric of this planet shrivels into the darkness of interstellar space. One of these principles is the acceptance of man's place in Nature, of the individual inhabitant's subservience to the surroundings of his house, and of the logical consequences that flow from the sincere attempt to produce an acceptable compromise between the best of which his dreams are capable and the best which the natural conditions of his site permit him to construct.

Few things have been more often written about, and few things remain so little understood, as the art and theory of architecture. Some writers have confused the stones with the history of which they formed a background ; others have magnified the details of unessential decoration until constructive problems have almost entirely disappeared ; others remain so prejudiced in favour of a certain school of thought that no other can expect to receive fair treatment at their hands ; and their story becomes a picture half of brilliant light and half of utter blackness, according to the position of their arbitrary dividing line. As a matter of fact, architecture is the most logical of all the crafts, whose mistress she deservedly is called. A certain conservatism is forced upon the architect who is faced by clients asking for a continuance of the conditions that commended themselves to his forbears ; a certain dependence on the handiwork of others is also essential to an art which would be impossible without innumerable assistants carrying out the master's wishes. But neither of these conditioning circumstances need destroy his own originality or limit the inventiveness of his subordinates. But we shall never get back to the old excellence by mere reproduction of the old models. No sign of decadence is more fatal than the languid preference for others' work above that which is necessitated by the new and different circumstances of a later age. There is but one source from which the ancient master and the modern architect may draw an equal inspiration, and that is the creative strength of Nature—of a Nature which never exactly reproduces, of a Nature whose primal law of betterment, and even of survival, is the subtlety of constant difference and the continuous adaptation of new needs to an environment that is ever changing.

The strength and beauty of those ancient buildings that are strong and beautiful to-day depend entirely upon these fundamental truths, and that is why such a building as Mont St. Michel, the offspring of four-and-twenty generations of differing workmen, holds its own place of pride at the beginning of the twentieth century as it held it at the beginning of the thirteenth. The "Merveille" of the pilgrims of Saint Louis is no less the marvel of the

\* Monument Historique de France.



modern traveller; and it has retained its empire not only in the material world, but in the spheres of art and thought, because it was the mighty offspring of a great creative force, and its Titanic life still throbs upon its island home, and will survive until the granite round its deepest roots has crumbled into nothingness.

The buttresses of Mont St. Michel rose at the bidding of a religious enthusiasm which inspired a whole community, an enthusiasm which abides, steadfast as the great Archangel's self, for ever in this place. Such stupendous buildings are not so much the work of one man as the prayer of thousands. By degrees the very stones themselves seem to take consciousness, to be informed with the immanent spirit that had called them into ordered being, and to control the destinies of those who work upon them. For such was the intensity of that first imagination that the completed ideal seemed ever hovering above unfinished walls and battlements until



I.—NORTH-EAST ANGLE OF THE "MERVEILLE."

each stone fell into its appointed place, each airy dream became reality in granite, and every wall and block of masonry joined in the mysterious life that animated, and still animates, the marvellous whole. This, again, is one reason why so many of the master masons are unknown to us, even by name. Their individuality was swallowed up, and happily surrendered, in that extraordinary outburst of sincerity and vital strength which is personified in the best of their completed buildings, and they live in their architecture only. Nowadays we know the names of hundreds of living architects, but in their work we do not always find that beauty which is independent of the accidents of time, and will appeal to every age as long as Nature,

its true mother, shall endure. As may be found in a few other of the finest sites in the world, Mont St. Michel has a worthy setting in the marvellous bay of which it is so unique a shrine. Between St. Malo on the west and Avranches on the east, the sea encroaches on the shore of France, just as the peninsula of the Cotentin encroaches on the waters of the Channel. Like Jersey and Guernsey, only a few miles to the north, Mont St. Michel, now bathed by the recurrent tides, was originally a part of the mainland; and, indeed, until as late as the eighth century its rocky pyramid appeared above the tree-tops of the vanished forest of Scissy, or Quokelunde, as the twelfth century chronicler calls it. The slow process of erosion had, without doubt, gone on for a long while, and must have begun soon after the Romans discontinued their use of the old military road, so that the furious tempest of 709 A.D. may have been the last stroke which crashed through the





2.---MONT ST. MICHEL FROM THE DIGUE.



weakness of the coastwise barriers, and filled the whole bay with a flood, engulfing all the land except the rocks of "Monjou," as it was then, and Tombelaine, a little further seawards.

The buildings now seen on Mont St. Michel were, of course, all made after the place had become an island, and it would be worth while for the authorities to consider whether the present efforts to reclaim lands as *prés salés* may not endanger the Mount itself to an extent for which no amount of mutton would prove an adequate compensation. The company which is now building dykes and polders in the bay is perfectly content if their operations bring in high dividends, and cannot be expected to consider the effects of compressing the strong tides against walls and battlements which have stood gallantly enough for some seven centuries against the natural flux and reflux of the changing sea. Such disasters, however, are not likely to be produced very suddenly, and for some years longer the bay will preserve its weird and extraordinary fascination, even in spite of railway trains and of superfluous dykes.

Its charm is something so characteristic that it is almost impossible to convey it to anyone who has not been there and felt it for himself. The agelong struggle of the elements has left an indelible mark upon the whole spot. Beneath the waves of the high tide, beneath the shifting sand it covers, lies the buried forest of Broceliande, and above them rise the abbey's

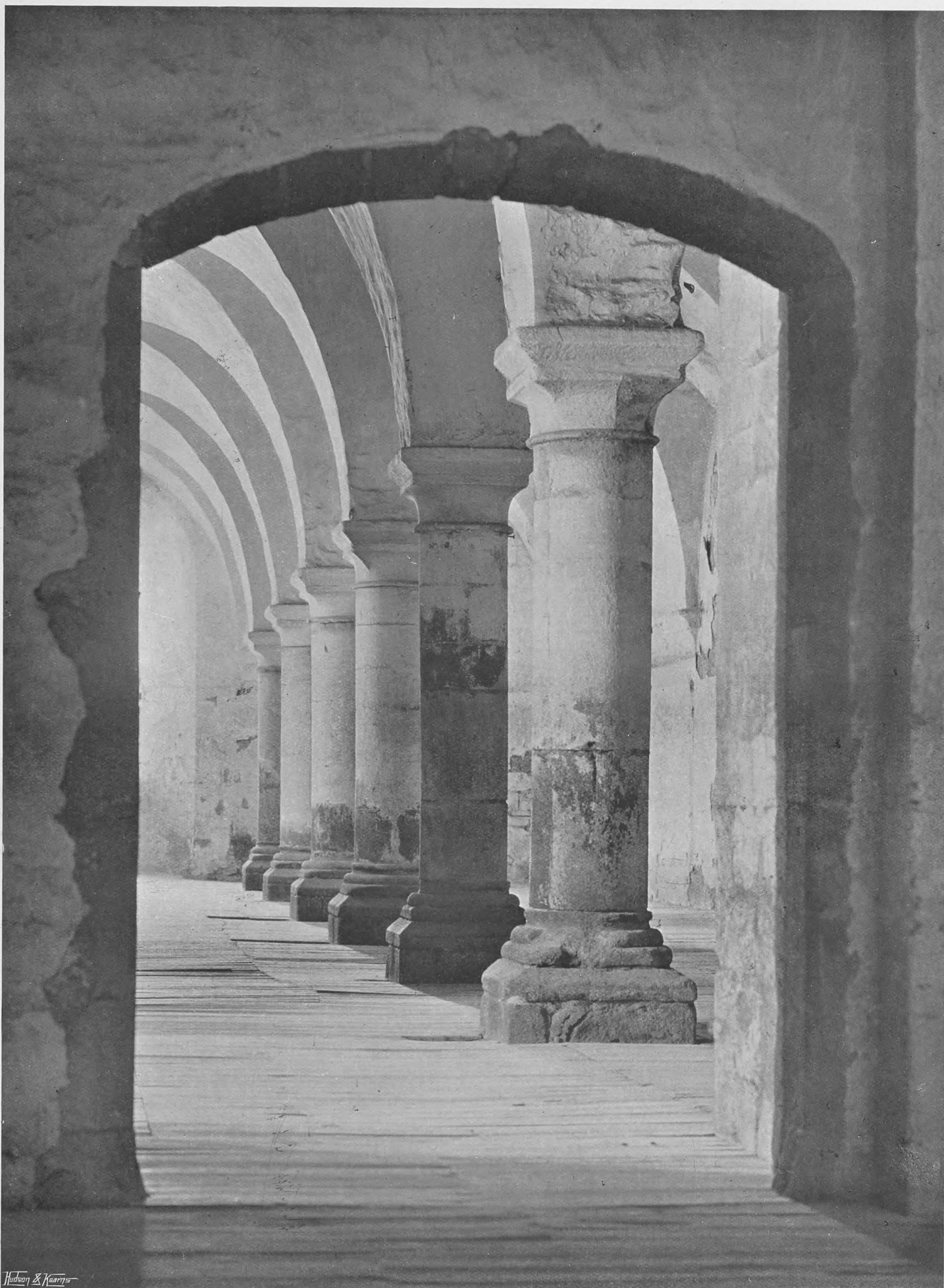
Magic casements, opening on the foam  
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn;  
Forlorn! the very word is like a bell . . .

And from the rock that rises over the shimmering sea the sound of a small bell echoes faintly across the waste expanse like the knell of a dead host. Between the whitening skeletons of trees, between the channels of the fresh streams from the mainland, along the soft and treacherous hollows of the clinging sand, the strong springtide has rushed out of the north and west, with a sound of sudden wind that leaves no ripple on its surface. Upon that vast translucent mirror the clouds pass to and fro in the solemn procession of the heavens, and the sunshine glitters, as on steel, beneath the rampart of the fortress gates. Yet it is only when the mount is thoroughly surrounded by this living tide of waters unwithstood that it seems really a part of solid Mother Earth. The sea is a known bond between us, and the boat a visibly familiar means of travel to the gigantic battlements of

That star-vaned belvedere  
Built against the chambers of the North,  
That outpost of the Infinite! And behold!  
Questing therefrom, you knew not what wild tide  
Might overtake you; for one fringe,  
One suburb's stablished on firm earth; but one  
Floats founded vague . . .

Among the mists that rise when the day's heat grows lesser, the mighty pyramid of virgin rock and laboured architecture points upward from its shadowy base towards St. Michael's lance, that last least point of fire which flames across the sinking splendour of the west, and crowns the pinnacles and lacelike tracery of the abbey choir. The sun swings lower still; and as the shadows grow and gather from the Continent a sound of sobbing fills the shaken air—"Immensi Tremor Oceani." The sea's strength ebbs away—almost you listen to the breathing of the planet, and the whole bay shudders in convulsive agony. Some strange force that is above the visible elements seems draining them of all their strength; some vast unnatural suction empties all their veins. The tide is falling. The sepulchre seems gaping for its prey, and all the dead that are within it are struggling to be free. The sand is ribbed as with the mounds of multitudinous graves, and from each mound is drawn its secret by the same resistless force. The pale lips of the sandy pools move in a passionate despair, and cling to shapes unseen, impalpable, which struggle in the hideous tentacles of death. Each quicksand throttles its own victim, slowly, surely, in spite of every effort to escape. His very struggles wrap him deeper in the hideous embrace of stifling mud. At length his arms alone, still trembling in a frenzy of abandonment, remain above the surface, and his last choking breath has fled. With sighs unnumbered, as of its countless souls that pass in pain, the firmament is filled. At last the grey and heaving solitude grows still. The "Mont Tombe" itself is hidden, or stains with but a deeper black the dark immensity of sky and sea. The tide is out on the horizon, and the night has fallen.





3.—THE ALMONRY IN THE "MERVEILLE."



From the most ancient days of history this mount has had its legend, its altars, its inhabitants. As Mount Belenus it was the shrine of Gaulish Druidesses, who worshipped where the legions of Imperial Rome had prayed before them. Tumulus they called it, or Mont Tombe, and sometimes Mons Jovis, or Monjou. So Tumba Helenae became the Tombelaine, that later on was made into a subsidiary shrine for St. Michael. Its last title the rock obtained only in 709, after St. Hubert, Bishop of Avranches, had received in a dream the commands of the Archangel to erect his shrine upon the hill amid the trees of Scissy. When the monks, who had been sent to Italy for help and sacred relics, returned, the place was wholly changed. Saint Michael had claimed it for his own. The forest was fathom deep beneath the sea that surged around the rock he guarded. After the founder, whose tiny chapel stands at the extreme northern edge of the rock where it slopes down into the sands, was named the first spring of



4. —THE ALMONRY.

fresh water that was discovered among the broken granite cliffs "in peril of the sea." The fame of the rough island-sanctuary grew year by year. In its earliest days King Childebert II visited it, and Charlemagne himself is said to have been among the first of that long line of monarchs who came to worship at its shrine. Soon afterwards the strong hand of Rolf the Ganger fell on those northern coasts. His marriage with Gisela, the Frank Princess, established his full sovereignty, and he forthwith repaired on Mont St. Michel the ravages which lesser pirates had cruelly inflicted. His son, William Longsword, added the strength of a great inheritance to the abbey's wealth. His grandson, Richard the Fearless, brought in the Benedictine monks from Fontenelle and Jumièges, and the position of the abbey became regularised by Papal Bulls, by charters from the French King Lothair, by laws from the strong Dukes of Normandy. Within its walls Duke Richard celebrated his marriage with Judith, daughter of the Duke of Brittany. The resources of the community developed upon every side. In 1040 King Edward

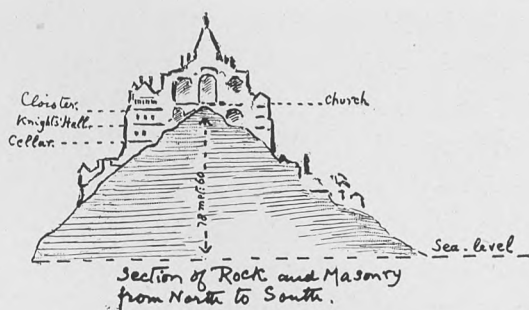


of England gave the monks that Mount of St. Michael off the coast of Cornwall which bears to this day so striking a resemblance to its elder sister. It was when a Hildebert, second of the name, was abbot in 1018 that the first dream of the magnificent structure the rock was afterwards to hold began to be materialised. The plan of the church, as it is now, was then for the first time determined on, though nothing of that early building now remains save a few of the substructures then commenced beneath what is still left of the ancient nave.

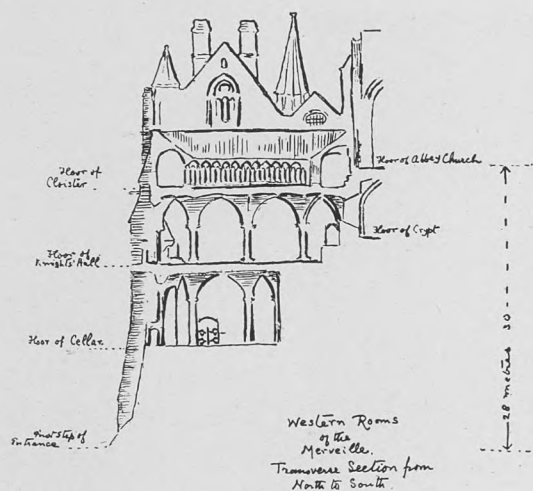
To realise what that first dream meant, and what labours were involved in carrying it out, we must consider not merely the site of these enormous buildings, but the capacity and power of those who built them. The rock itself was originally, and is still, a rough conical pyramid of natural splintered granite. Hildebert determined that the church should rise upon its very summit. The "platform" was a small one; but he never seems to have considered the possibility of cutting down the living rock until a broader space appeared. He chose the daring alternative of building up from below until the church and all its necessary surroundings were raised upon huge buttresses of masonry rooted into the sloping buttresses of rock beneath. The mount was tall enough, and he would use each inch of height to raise his shrine still nearer to the sky. But it was not broad enough, so he would build the breadth he needed. It was a Titanic aspiration, and that it was fulfilled at all is perhaps the best tribute possible to the faith and perseverance and indomitable courage of the slow, laborious generations of its builders.

The abbots of Mont St. Michel had sent ships over to England to help William the Conqueror; but they had also begun, with his great grandfather's assistance, those massive structures that may still be seen beneath their Abbey Church. They now went further still. One nave, of which four vaults still remain, was nearing its completion. The four huge columns of the crossing

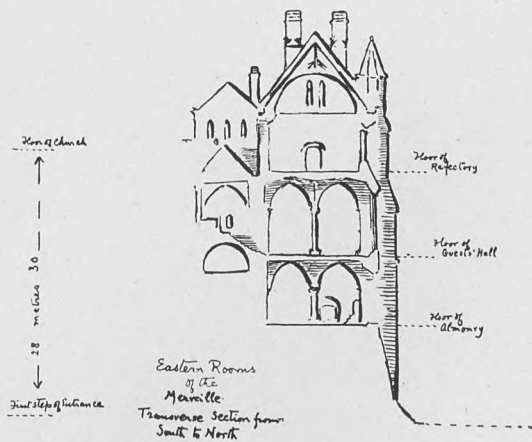
beneath the central tower had been set up before 1084. After a fire in 1112 had destroyed much precious work, the crypt, called the Aquilon, and the "monks' promenade" above it, had been finished. Robert of Thorigny was elected abbot in 1154. The manuscripts he left behind him would alone have been sufficient for one reputation, and under his rule the mount became celebrated far and wide as "The City of Books." But he did more solid work besides; and nearly all the buildings to the south and west that are on a level with the "Hall of the Great Pillars" are his additions to the strength and usefulness of the whole abbey. His coffin was found in 1875 beneath the ruins of the western porch he built. That has vanished long since, with three vaults of the ancient nave. But the improvements he began seemed suddenly to be about to end, and end for ever. In 1203 Guy de Thouars and his Bretons, who had never forgotten or forgiven the homage they had been compelled to render there to Henry II, set fire to the houses round the abbey walls, and nearly all the abbey buildings on the north side were destroyed. A catastrophe that would have meant despair to lesser souls only roused the strenuous monks to greater exertions than they had ever made before. The direct result of the fire of 1203 was the stupendous building known as "La Merveille," which was raised



5.—ROCK: SECTION N. TO S.



6.—MERVEILLE: SECTION N. TO S.



7.—MERVEILLE: SECTION S. TO N.



by Abbot Jourdain with the help of Philip Augustus, King of France. The curious increase of floor-space as he moves upwards is the first thing that will strike the attentive visitor, and the clever planning of the vaults is, perhaps, the most significant structural achievement of all. The variety in treatment of the columns and their capitals entirely depends upon the function they each have to fill, and the plan of lighting and of window decoration is equally subordinate to strictly practical requirements, yet is invariably attractive to the æsthetic traveller who seeks an appeal to his immediate sense of taste without too much enquiry into the material possibilities of satisfying it. The compromise between the necessary and the beautiful is, indeed, complete; and the fact that the whole building, with its six main apartments, was raised in a single effort spread over only five-and-twenty years gives it a unity and harmony which uninstructed eyes might seek in vain in the more obvious external oppositions of the Abbey Church.

This splendid block of buildings, containing three floors, with two rooms on each, was completed between 1203 and 1228, and was constructed from stone brought from the mainland, as it had been found that the stone quarried in the mount itself was not good enough, even if there had been sufficient. The difficulty of managing so huge a task would be serious even to-day; that it was surmounted early in the thirteenth century is not the least marvellous part of the whole achievement. On the lowest floor the almonry is on the east, and the cellar to



8.—THE CELLAR OF MONTGOMERY.

the west, which may be compared with the fine cellars at Saint Lo, Vauclair, Beauport, Clermont, and the abbeys of Thury (Oise), Rigny (Yonne) and Noirlac (Cher). The almonry and cellar of Mont St. Michel have the rock on which the church is built to the south, and each has a north wall looking out over the sea. Situated between the eastern entry to the abbey and the cellar on the west, this almonry is most convenient for receiving the poor people who came up for help, and for distributing food to them without troubling the rest of the abbey by either of these operations, as may be seen by an examination of the





9.—THE CELLAR OF THE "MERVEILLE."

spiral staircases which serve the "Merveille" as a whole. It is not often realised that much of the spaciousness of mediæval buildings and a great deal of their convenience was owing to the fact that, apart from having usually a large spiral staircase for the use of the owner and his family, they also contained several smaller spiral staircases in the thickness of the walls which were used both for domestic or military service and for private communication between members of the family.

The appropriateness of the masonry in the various apartments of the "Merveille," both to the work it has to do and to the special usage of each particular room, may be already remarked in these two lower apartments. The almonry pillars have just sufficient suggestion of decoration in capitals, bases and vaulting to suit the dignity of the abbey and the purposes of a promiscuous gathering for the distribution of alms. And it is never forgotten that those pillars and vaults have to uphold the weight of the Salle des Hôtes above, and of the refectory above that again. In the cellar, a strictly utilitarian storehouse, presumably visited only by brethren of the order in search of stores and wine, nothing but serviceable massiveness, well-proportioned spacing and good ventilation have been considered, apart from the difference in plan and construction due to the presence of the Salle des Chevaliers and of the cloister above it. And the contrast, slight yet very evident, may be immediately seen by anyone who passes from one apartment to the other. The visitor, if he uses his eyes, will also remark the enormous strength of the door fastenings between the two apartments. This was owing to a well-grounded fear that if any enemy chanced by a sudden or treacherous attack to get possession of the cellar, he might advance into the very heart of the abbey buildings by way of the almonry, unless some extremely sturdy obstacles delayed his further progress. The arrangements necessary both for hauling up barrels and provisions from outside, and for distributing them on higher floors, made this peril even greater; and that the suspicions thus aroused were solidly founded became evident (in 1591) when the mount was holding out for



the Catholics while the Huguenot Montgomery—whose father slew the French King Henri II by mischance in a tournament—held Avranches and the surrounding country.

I will so far digress in time, though not in space, as to tell this short tragedy now, because it will lend a special interest to an apartment that might otherwise seem slightly bare and dull.

At the time of the attack on Mont St. Michel which had so grim an ending, the massacre of St. Bartholomew was not a score of years old; the coasts of Normandy had but two seasons ago seen the wreckage of the defeated Armada washed up from the English Channel. In that same year (1588) Paris had seen its "Day of Barricades," and Blois had trembled at the murder of the Duc de Guise. In 1589 the miserable King had been himself assassinated.

The reign of Henry of Navarre began with an even greater intensification of the divisions in the unhappy Kingdom of France, divisions which were due as much to personalities and plots as to religious questions. Henry chose Normandy as his own battlefield; Senlis, Compiègne, Gournay, Gisors, Caen and Dieppe surrendered to him. He took Eu and Tréport and established himself near the castle of Arques, and soon wrote to "the brave Crillon" to hang himself for having missed such splendid fighting. All Normandy except Rouen and Mont St. Michel acknowledged him. Yet even the victory of Ivry only roused Paris to sturdier resistance. The Papal legate and the ecclesiastical champions of the League led out Cordeliers, Jacobins, Carmelites and Capuchins in arms, a travesty of the "Church Militant" that was not without significance for every abbot. The Spaniard's reinforcements kept the King out of his capital, and Henry was obliged to return from the Ile de France to complete the subjugation of Normandy by the siege of Rouen in 1591, to which many Englishmen were sent over by Elizabeth in aid of the Protestant cause. It was as a part of these operations that a Huguenot detachment under Montgomery attempted to take Mont St. Michel, and it may well be that a few Englishmen were with them, on a spot which had been consecrated to the memories of their race not only by the visit of Harold just before the Norman Conquest, but by that defeat of Henry VI's soldiers, soon after the death of Joan of Arc, which was still recalled to every visitor by the captured English bombards at the very entrance of St. Michael's fortress.

In 1591 Montgomery knew better than to trust to open violence. An attempt in 1577 had proved that entry by the upper platforms was too dangerous. So he bribed a prisoner to return and find some other opening by which an attacking force could treacherously make their way in. The man was glad enough to get his life, with one hundred crowns to boot; and it would be a pretty problem in casuistry to decide whether he was right or wrong in making up his mind not only to do the deed for which Montgomery had paid him, but also to inform the Captain of the Mount of the whole transaction. I have heard it argued that it is not only correct to take a political bribe, but even more correct to punish the tempter by voting against him after appropriating the money he has put to so dishonourable a use. It may be so; in the bypaths traversed by traitors there is room for the drawing of very nice distinctions—too nice to be understood by ordinary men. Fortunately, however, we are not here concerned with motives; the action that was the inevitable sequence of what has gone before is quite sufficient to engage our whole attention.

Imagine the desolate bay of Mont St. Michel at low tide on the night of September 29th, 1591, just six weeks before Henry of Navarre began the regular investment of the city of Rouen. There was no moon, and only the fitful light of a few stars shone here and there upon the pools of water or the quaking sands as Montgomery's Huguenots picked their way cautiously across from Pontorson, between the ebb and flow. They worked slowly round to that tiny chapel of St. Aubert, on the very edge of the north-western rock from which a flight of steps led upwards to the lowest floor of the "Merveille." The Cardinal de Joyeuse was the Abbot at that time, holding the Mount for the Catholics, and it will easily be understood that his military governor, Du Boschage de Basternay, did not post a sentinel at the bottom of the steps that night. So, finding no obstacle, the Huguenots mounted silently in single file until they found themselves at the foot of that cliff of masonry which supports the lowest floor of the great cellar of the "Merveille." Its windows were still high above their heads; but they saw the light that had been prearranged in one of them, and the first Huguenot took his place in the huge basket of wickerwork and cord by which the monks hauled up their grain and wine.



The traitor was apparently at his post, for as soon as the soldier's weight had tightened the cord the great windlass overhead slowly began to revolve. The Huguenot rose in the air and disappeared in the black hole that opened in the lower storeys of the "Merveille." Another and another followed. The same deep silence still wrapped the mysterious abbey above them, and spread darkly over the sands beneath their feet. A far-off murmur from the horizon warned Montgomery that there was no time to lose. Their retreat would soon be cut off for some hours. His companions, Sourdeval and Chaseguey, became impatient at hearing nothing of what was going on inside the abbey, in spite of nearly a hundred men having gone in. They shouted for news, and there was no reply. They called up to their friends to throw them down the body of a monk to show that all was going well. No answer. Suddenly a black and shapeless form seemed to detach itself from the deep shadows of the towering masonry above, where the rope still swung on which the soldiers had been suspended in the air as though from some gigantic gallows-tree. The sinister object swayed for a moment as the night wind caught its black folds, and hovered like some foul-omened bird of prey above them, then fell swiftly at their feet. It was a dead body in the cowl and cassock of a monk.

Chaseguey was for mounting at once, but Montgomery restrained him, for the shattered corpse had not entirely removed his growing suspicions. He sent up his most trusted and his bravest soldier, with strict orders that at all hazards the truth must be known. The man swung slowly upwards, and disappeared in silence as before; and all the time the lapping of the little rivulets upon the sand grew more insistent on the midnight air, and a cold breeze murmured from the east with the sound of the advancing sea. A great cry came from the walls above them, "Treason! Treason!" and another shout, soon stifled. The next moment the long rope fell downwards, severed by a sword-cut,



10.—PASSAGE IN THE CELLAR.



and the end that fell beside Montgomery's feet was red with blood. All means of getting into the grim abbey were henceforth destroyed. The tide was rising rapidly. With panic at their hearts, and troubled questionings for their lost comrades, Montgomery's men fled hurriedly towards the chapel of St. Aubert, and stumbled in terror across the sands towards Pontorson. Sourdeval knew the way; but the little stream of Couesnon



11.—FIREPLACE IN THE KNIGHTS' HALL.

that they had jumped across so easily an hour or so before was boiling angrily between its shifting banks. Every pool of water in the starlight seemed throwing out tentacles of living moisture. A path of sand that ran out straight before them would shiver suddenly, and disappear beneath a sullen wave of grey, thick water, that grew deep even as they discovered



its coming. Sourdeval held on. Here and there a bubbling cry sounded to right and left. A man was drowning. Wet to the skin, horror struck, despairing, the remnant of Montgomery's command staggered into Pontorson just as the monks upon the mount had finished their work within the walls of the "Merveille," now brightly lit above the rippling sea.

Each Huguenot, as he appeared within the cellar in the basket, had been swiftly bound and gagged by two of the abbey guard within. The first score or so were taken through the almonry, and despatched in the Salle des Gardes round the other side. The procedure was soon found too slow. The next few dozen were butchered in the almonry. The last five-and-twenty were stabbed to death upon the cellar floor. Montgomery's favourite soldier had alone been spared. He had seen the death of the comrade who preceded him, and, with Basternay's own dagger at his throat, he turned and shouted to his friends below; and, for that final act of self-sacrificing heroism, they granted him his life. It is the one bright spot in a scene of treachery and carnage.

Let us leave it, and the terrible memories of "Montgomery's Cellar," and go upwards nearer to the light. Exactly above it is the magnificent room known as the Salle des Chevaliers.

It was used, soon after it had been built, as the chapter house and general meeting-place of the monks, and contains three rows of columns, which present a happy combination of strength with dignified ornament. The two rows nearest the sea rise perpendicularly above the pillars of the cellar. The third row is possible only because the rock is now gradually sloping upwards, and these columns therefore fill the extra space right



12.—SALLE DES CHEVALIERS.

up to the crypt of the north transept of the church—an arrangement which not only explains the greater extent of this hall as compared with the cellar, but also provides an excellent example of the skill with which Gothic builders could adapt their methods of construction to spaces of any size or shape. The plan of this hall was also modified by the consideration that it had to carry the northern, eastern and western arcades of the cloister above it, and its walls had to bear this weight in addition to that of their own vaults. The southern arcade of the cloister was perfectly safe above that part of the Salle des Chevaliers which was additionally strengthened by the substructures of the northern transept; but it was very necessary not to overtax the north wall of the hall, and the masonry and vaulting are carefully and successfully calculated to that end. The ribs concentrate the weight from above on strong pillars, which never become ungraceful; and the thrust upon the outer walls is compensated by a magnificent series of buttresses. Few better examples of Gothic construction could be picked out or which are more simple and honest in their solution of the given problem; and the simplicity which only comes from perfect



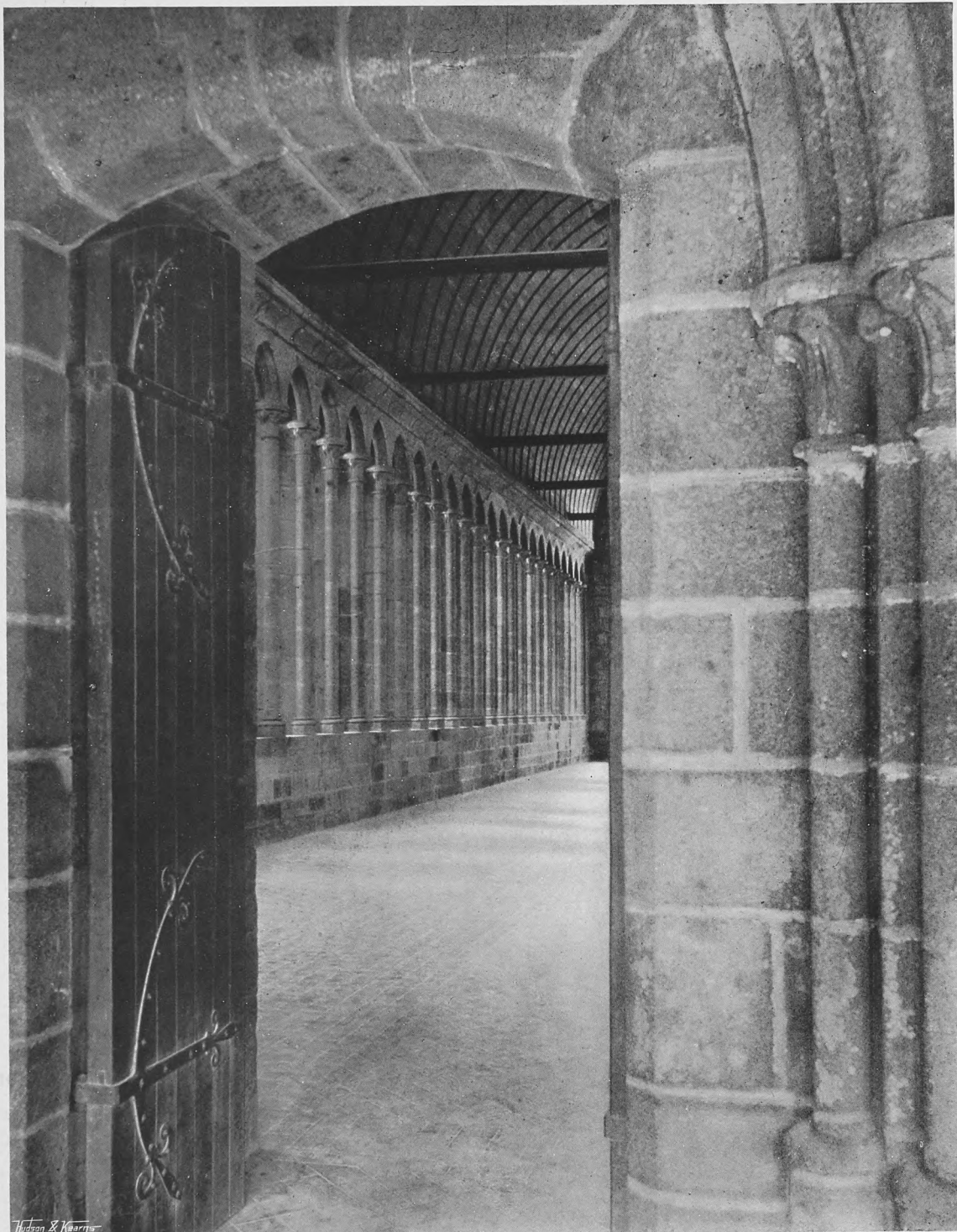
knowledge brings its own reward in a lasting charm of appropriate proportions that can never, in its own way, be surpassed. Even in the accidental difficulties produced by such details as the combination of hooded chimneys with the vaulting over them, the same frank and capable solution is apparent; and it will be noticed that two fireplaces were considered necessary for warming so large an apartment, just as we find at Laon or Coucy, while at Fougères, Fontenoy and the palaces of Bourges and Poitiers there are three. The castle of Montargis had four. The artist who solved so many constructive problems was no less able to give his mind to decoration, as the capitals of his columns will sufficiently demonstrate. But he knew where to stop. The sheaf of springing ribs is solidly bound together in one strong band of stone above the ring of leaves; and the bases, instead of reproducing the mere circle, are octagonal,



13.—THE SALLE DES HOTES.



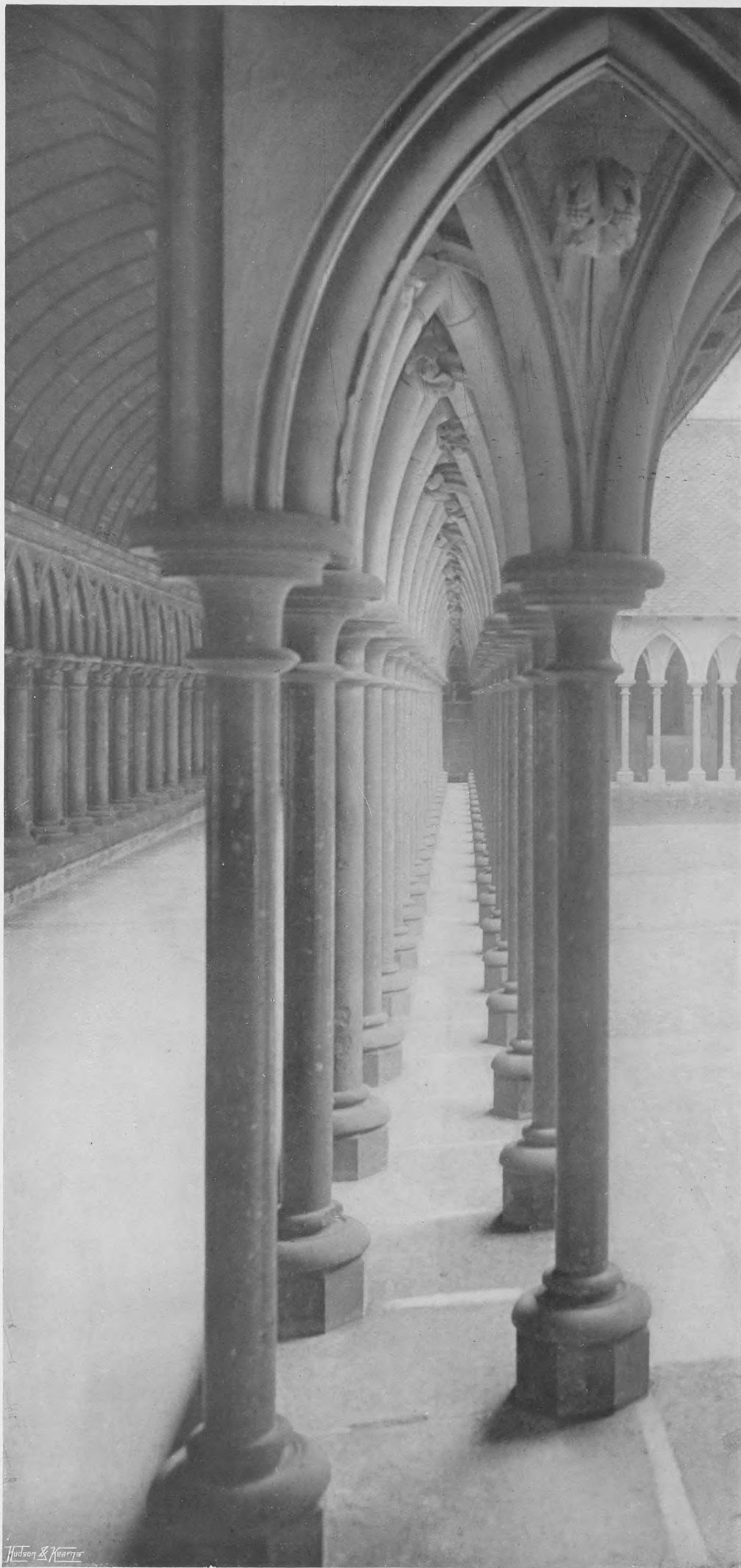
which seems to suggest greater strength, at the same time that it pleasantly varies the design. The name of the Salle des Chevaliers is usually said to be derived from the fact that within it, in 1470, Louis XI held the first chapter of the Knights of the Order of St. Michael which he had instituted the year before; and it is not difficult to realise how splendid was the scene when the knights, clad in white damask, sewn with ermine and with golden cockleshells, filled this magnificent apartment at the bidding of the King. But this was the only meeting ever held here, for in 1557 the headquarters of the Order were transferred to Vincennes. To my



14.—THE REFECTORY FROM THE CLOISTER.

mind it is more probable that the name Salle des Chevaliers came from a fact far more striking in the history of France, and was meant to commemorate the heroism of those one hundred and nineteen knights gathered from all the country round to defend St. Michael's Mount from the attacks of the English in 1434. The fortress upon Tombelaine, which the English then held, is visible from its windows, as is the well near the chapel of St. Aubert, one of the most important strategic points in the fortifications. The names of all these victorious knights, who kept the English out after nearly the whole of Northern France had fallen, were carefully preserved, with their shields, on Mont St. Michel; and this hall may well have been chosen by Louis XI for the first chapter of his new Order of chivalry in special commemoration of the courageous defenders of five-and-thirty years before. The Salle des Hôtes is the graceful apartment beyond, to the east of the Salle des Chevaliers, and in distinction from the monastical uses for which the latter had been first intended, this Salle des Hôtes was built to receive those distinguished guests whose welcome would appropriately partake much less of an ecclesiastical character than of the free and dignified hospitality extended by one "grand seigneur" to another. Its three huge chimneys, the rich frescoes and tapestries which originally decorated it, and the slender beauty of its columns and vaulting, all emphasise the same impression. The





15.—VAULTING IN THE CLOISTER.

separate chapel of Ste. Madeleine, which is an integral part of the same building, adds the final proof that this was an apartment reserved for men and women of distinction who were not supposed to mingle with the life of the monks; and the original plan of the staircases attached to it is yet another indication that the place was definitely set apart. It is quite possible that the hall was also used by the Abbot on those occasions when the exercise of his justice, as a feudal seigneur, necessitated the presence within his walls of a mixed company who were not admitted to the privacy of his community. The very various uses (which were often degradations) to which this noble hall was put in successive centuries do not invalidate the argument for the original intentions of its builders, and the fact that Pierre Béraud made it a refectory in 1629 need not confuse the modern visitor. The real original refectory is on the next floor, exactly above the Salle des Hôtes, and to the east of the cloister; and as the traveller is wont to be still further mystified by being told (even by so excellent an authority as Camille Enlart) that this long range of narrow windows was so arranged in order to light up the separate cubicles of the monks' dormitory, it is worth indicating why the hall on the east of, and at the same level as, the cloister must be the refectory and can be nothing else.

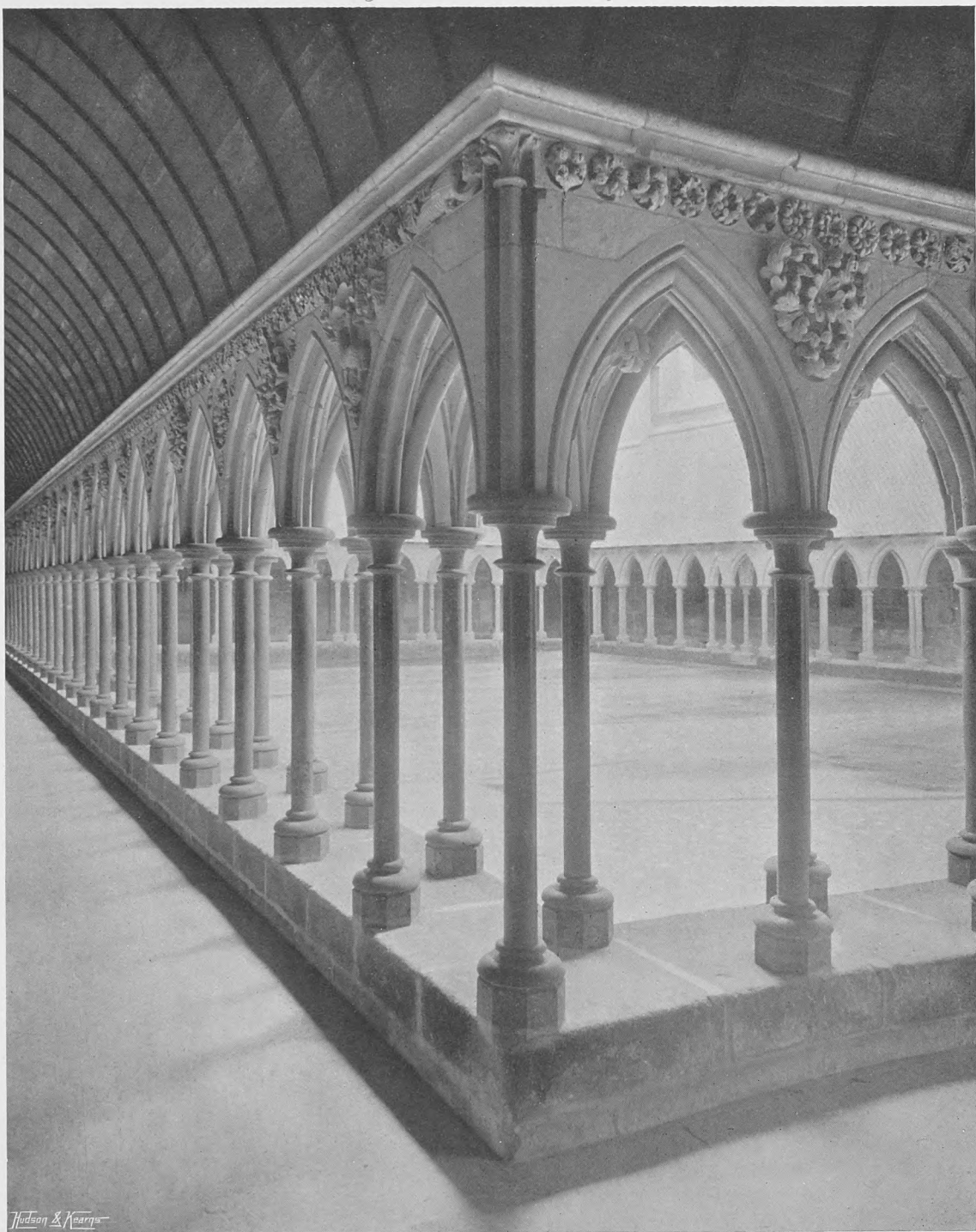
Though its size and ventilation are in accord



with the principles on which abbey dormitories were built, its position is not. This would naturally be above the Promenoir des Moines near the west end of the church, where the dormitory was originally placed in order to allow the monks easy access from their beds to the night services of the church. Moreover, the site of the refectory near the cloister follows the usual plan, as may be seen at Silvacane (Bouches du Rhône), Bonport (Eure), Beauport (Côtes du Nord), Léhon (Ile et Vilaine), St. Martin des Champs (Paris), Noirlac (Cher), or Fontevault (Maine et Loire), to name no others. Further, the lighting of this hall at Mont St. Michel is not appropriate to a sleeping apartment, which usually has smaller windows, as at Mortemer, Fontaine-Guérard,

or Maillezais, and generally retains traces of the small cupboard fixed near every bed, as at Lapais (Cyprus). Further, in the room at Mont St. Michel there is a charming little recess made in the embrasure of one of the long windows in which a man might sit with a good light coming over his shoulder, and his head high enough to show over the low partition. Obviously it is made for reading, and still more clearly it is so arranged that those in the hall could hear what was being read aloud to them. It does not seem appropriate to a dormitory, for in a sleeping-room no one was likely to go to the window for the sake of a view, and

naturally light during sleeping hours would not be good enough for reading. Yet this is most certainly a "chaire" or reading desk, and it served that purpose here; for the monks had passages from "The Fathers" read to them while they ate in the refectory, so that no time should be lost in their life's task of religious instruction, and that unseemly conversation might be avoided while they met together to support their frail bodies for yet further toil in spiritual exercises. Curiously enough, a reading chair of the same kind, reached by a stone arcade in the wall, may still be seen, used as a pulpit, in the parish church of Beaulieu, which is formed of the refectory of the Cistercian Abbey now in the possession of



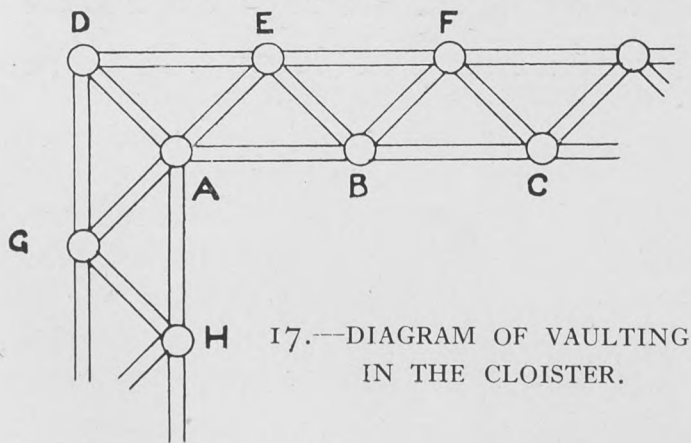
16.—MONT ST. MICHEL : THE ABBEY CLOISTER.



Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, near the New Forest. A similar recess, with stairs leading out of the hall, and a few simple and effective decorations, may be seen in the Cistercian Refectory at Poblet (Catalonia). Sometimes this reader's recess bulged out on the exterior wall, so as to take up none of the space inside, as in the Refectory of Moncel (Oise), which is reached by stairs cut in the thickness of the wall. Sometimes a round, projecting bracket held the reader's chair, to which a tiny hidden stairway with a special entrance led upwards from the floor, as at Lapais; or the recess projected squarely from the wall, ornamented with carved Gothic tracery, as in the Refectory of Villefranche (Aveyron), where the recess for the stairway is open to view behind the quarter-circle of an arch. The presence of this detail in the room at Mont St. Michel is conclusive proof of its original destination; and when the Benedictines of St. Maur (who altered the uses of the "Salle des Hôtes," as we have seen) changed this room into a dormitory they found it so cold for this purpose that they had to install a heating chamber near it, to block up part of the windows, and to conceal the porch, which was an invariable adjunct of refectories, behind a staircase.

The architecture of this refectory shows that it is the highest of the three rooms in the block of which it forms a part, and that nothing is above it. The space in the roof of the whole building is utilised for purposes of light and ventilation. The outside wall has to be thick enough to bear the thrust of this roof, and yet must not be too heavy for the halls beneath. It was therefore built of the same strength and thickness all along, to correspond to the uniform pressure of the roof vault, and divided at regular intervals with long, narrow windows that light the whole room uniformly without weakening its wall. Thus this entirely practical arrangement develops into a magnificently ornamental treatment of the outside at the same time as it fulfils everything necessary for lighting and for constructional purposes within. The view of the north side of the "Merveille," showing its splendid straight buttresses ending in this strong yet delicate line of arched recesses, is a triumph of design; and the way in which the wall openings gradually increase in light-giving capacity from the bottom floor to the top, without ever losing any necessary strength, is very noticeable in so huge and daringly constructed an edifice.

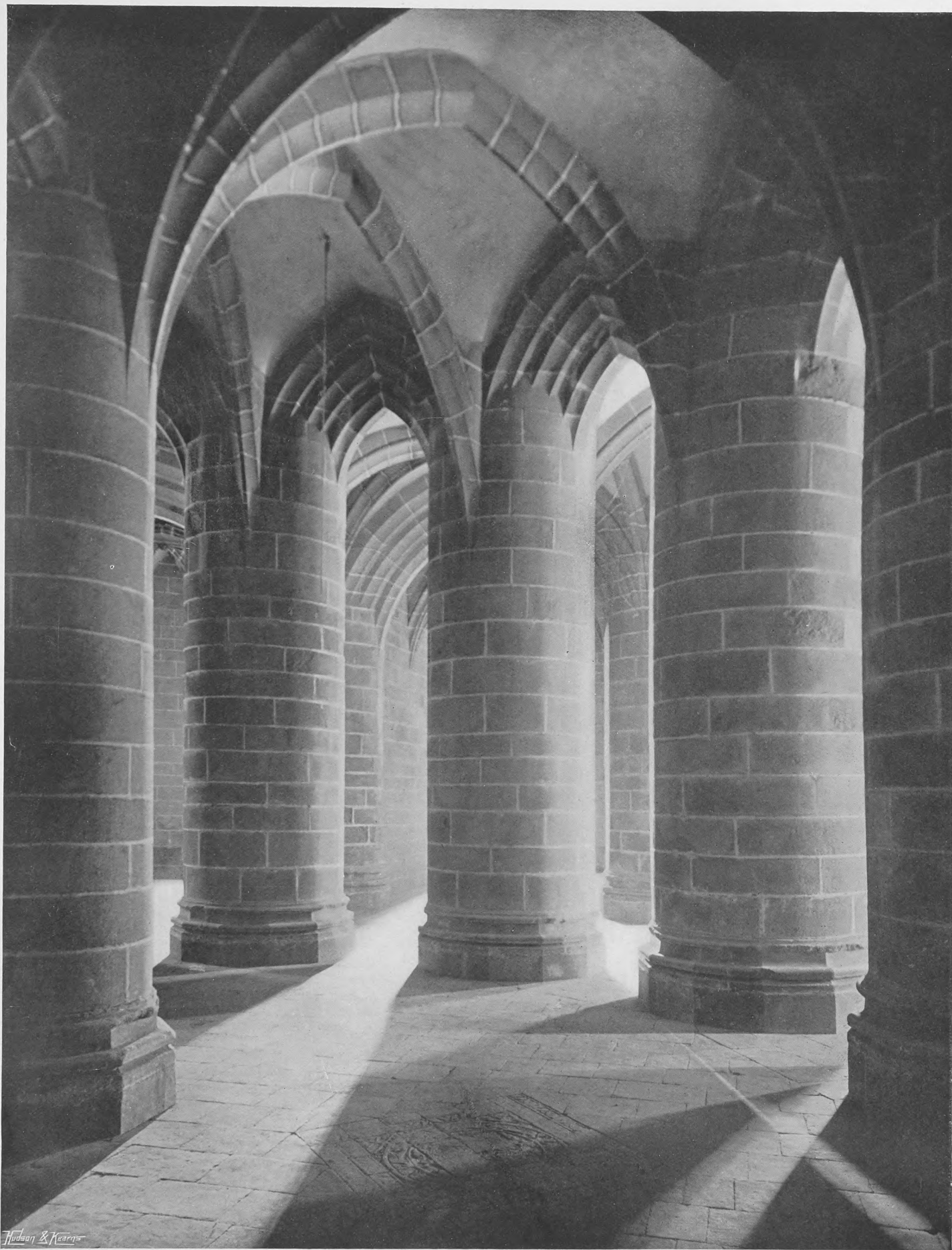
The cloister is the last building in the "Merveille" to which I need draw particular attention, for it is only typical portions of this immense mass of masonry on the mount that I can here describe. But this cloister is almost the final note in that strong gamut of architectural harmony which the composition of these mighty buildings has evoked. Once more we find that the logical, common-sense solution of a constructive problem has produced a decorative effect so fine that it might well be imagined this lovely quadrangle was built on firm ground within the parvis of some cathedral in a plain, and built with sole regard to ornament and beauty. The open space within is laid with sheets of lead, instead of being turfed with grass, and this is the first reminder we have that the cloister really stands above the Salle des Chevaliers, and the Cellier de Montgomerie, as an integral part of a large and complicated building. This is one of the most complete, as it is one of the most curious, cloisters in France, and the first detail in it to which the visitor's attention should be turned is the arrangement of the colonnettes that bear the graceful, pointed arches round its sides. (See Figs. 15 and 16). From the inside of the central space these arches do not at first seem very extraordinary, though the beautiful effect of shadow on the springing of the inner rib-vaults is intensified by the light upon the masonry outside them.



17.—DIAGRAM OF VAULTING  
IN THE CLOISTER.

But, if you go to one corner and look down the line of slender pillars, you will find they are not arranged in pairs, one opposite the other. The whole construction is built in a series of tripods or triangles. A small diagram will make this clearer. From this it is evident that the thrust of the roof is upheld not merely at two points in every bay, but at three points, which is stronger even than four, because the strain is more distributed and the work of the two rows of columns is, as it were, locked together. The effect is more noticeable

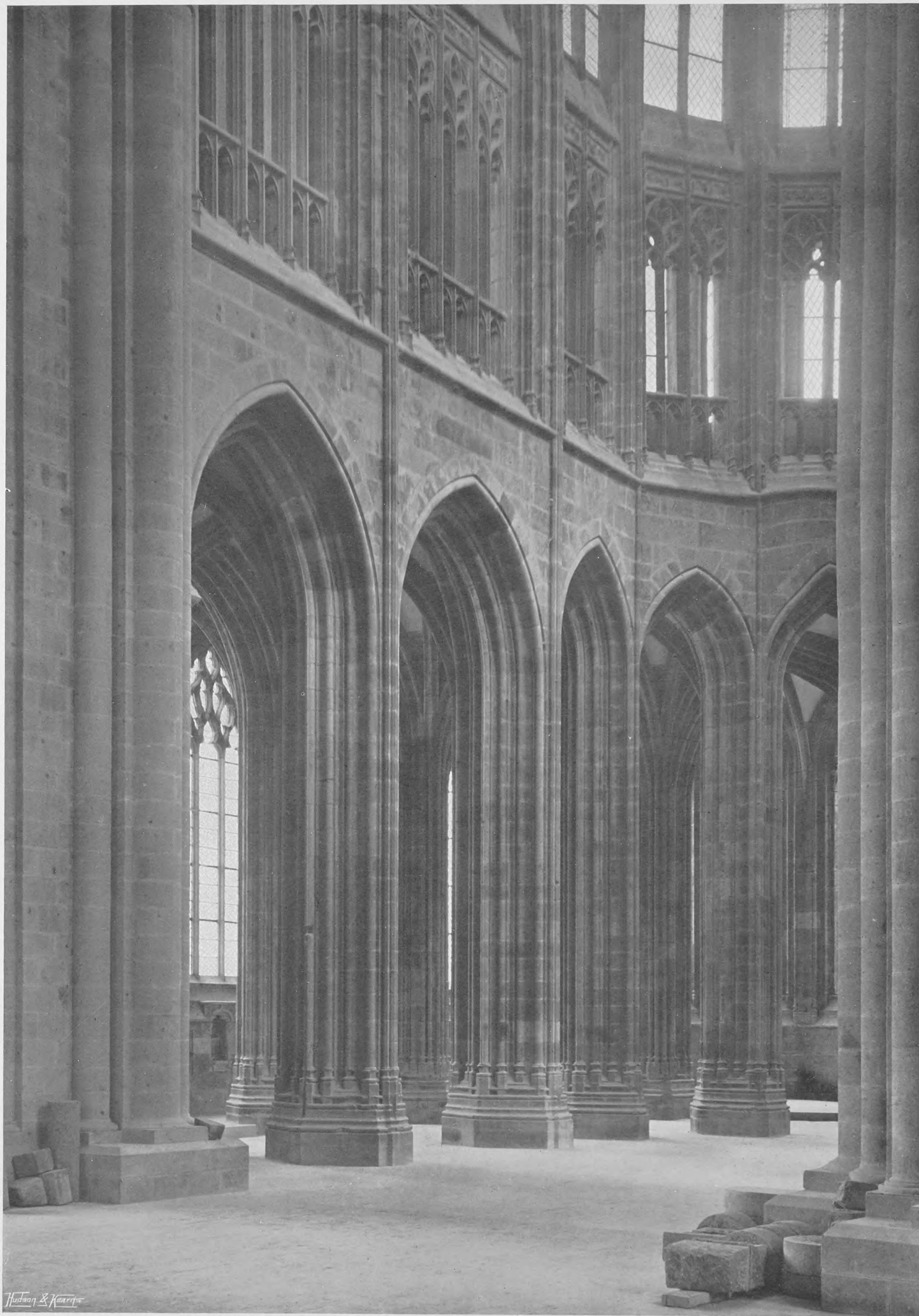




18.—“LES GROS PILIERS.”

at a corner than anywhere, for it will be seen that on the capital marked A are gathered together the clustering vault-ribs from H, G, D, E and B, while each of these points in its turn takes three or more thrusts from elsewhere, D, for instance, receiving ribs from G, A and E only, while E receives them from D, A, B and F, and B takes those of A, E, F and C. The capitals are simple rings, just large enough to hold and embrace the members they carry; and the plain columns are only just strong enough for the weight they have to bear. This is essential to avoid too great a pressure on the walls of the Salle des Chevaliers below. The only





19.—THE ABBEY CHURCH.



carving is the finely undercut series of spandrels, composed sometimes of figures and sometimes of flowers. The new tiles on the roof seemed somewhat glaring when I saw them soon after they had been placed in position; but they have now weathered in better harmony with the grey stones, and it must be remembered that our eyes are no longer accustomed to the wealth of colour which once blazed all over mediæval buildings that are now bare stone. Cathedrals and cloisters, now of a uniform grey or white, originally glowed with red and blue and gold wherever the walls were not covered with rich tapestries or frescoes or mosaics. So there was far more colour in Saint Michael's cloister than we see now, even with the brilliant tiles upon its roof, and we only gain perhaps in the fact that our attention is consequently more concentrated than might otherwise be the case upon the exquisite combination of stability with lightness which its delicate proportions have achieved.

The care with which the cloister was built, as well as designed, may be seen in the fact that while the pillars are of polished granite, the arcades above them are not of the native granite from the Mount as is usually the case here, but of white Caen limestone, which was thus carefully transported to the very summit of the "Merveille" for this purpose. The composition and execution of these carvings are particularly worthy of attention, designed as they are to be seen by the monks as they walked round inside, and only by reflected light. They are therefore never too crowded. Spaces of

well-contrived blank wall frame the important details. Single compositions are never broken or confused by structural lines. Each group fits into its appropriate place, and the one art amplifies and dignifies the other. Yet each subject is carved with the freedom of the workman in his studio, a freedom only restrained by legitimate considerations of structural appropriateness. The level of the crossing in the church is so exactly the summit of the rock that



20.—BUTTRESSES OF THE APSE.



towards all four points of the compass substructures had to be built to support the complete edifice. These were the crypt beneath the choir, called the "Gros Piliers," the chapels underneath the north and south transept and the monks' cemetery under the nave. This nave had originally seven bays, of which three are lost, the gap at the break having been closed, soon after 1776, by the unattractive façade which can only be excused as a kind of completion in the course of architecture furnished by the buildings on the Mount. This nave was first roofed, as were the transepts, with wooden beams. The four great piers at the crossing, which support the belfry, were first set up in 1058. The fall of the old Romanesque choir in 1421 weakened them, and they were further distorted by the heavy tower of 1602, so that they had to be strengthened in 1838, and were finally restored in 1876, to receive the new belfry crowned with the statue of Saint Michael modelled by Frémiet.

The existing choir was begun in 1450, and it is difficult to believe that the stonework within and without it was carved from the same hard granite which was used in the old nave. As a matter of fact, the carving is not so extraordinarily delicate, but the style of its treatment is so entirely different from the Romanesque out of which it seems to grow that many enthusiasts

have imagined its refined tracery to be more wonderful than its skilled adaptation of the old means to new and ampler ends. The stairway on the roof known as the "Escalier de dentelle" is really by no means "lace-like" in its detail. Its chief beauty is in the constructive excellence of the flying buttress upon which it rests. The rich effect of the apse is much heightened by the balustrade which joins the buttresses to one another and lines the terrace over the extreme eastern windows; and the walk round the outside of the choir-triforium (which is reached by a circular stairway in the thickness of one buttress) is not only beautiful in its spectacular effect, but essential



21.—BUTTRESSES OF THE APSE.





22.—THE SOUTH TRANSEPT FROM ACROSS THE CHOIR.

to the proper preservation of the building. The advance in French architecture could nowhere be better exemplified than by the contrast between the nave of the abbey church and its choir. Between the dates when these were built came the thirteenth century, perhaps the most extraordinary epoch of architectural development the world has ever seen; and what it meant may be best appreciated by a careful comparison between the pillars and vaulting of this apse and the columns to the west of them. I have only space here to add that the upper



church was linked to the Abbot's lodging by a wooden bridge, and that the crypt (or Gros Piliers) was similarly connected by means of the fortified stone bridge that crosses the great entrance stairway, and was originally finished off along the top with a line of crenellated battlements.

The little town that climbs uphill from the sea towards the abbey church is itself full of interest, and would be worth a visit if the sole building it contained were the Museum, where some most interesting carvings and armour may be examined. The principal town gate opens on the sands at the west, and in the court known as "l'Avancée" are still preserved the English bombards captured in 1434. Two more gates have to be passed—the "Barbican" and the "Porte du Roi"—before you are in "the street"—the only street that Mont St. Michel boasts. The oldest houses still preserve their ancient names—the Royal Sun, the Golden Head, the Three Kings, the Cockle Shell, the Black Head, the White Pigeon, the Four Sons of Aymon and the house where Tiphaine, wife of Bertrand du Guesclin, once lodged. From here you may go round about the bulwarks and mark well the towers thereof; and there is no better place in which to dream about their history. Some of their most important happenings I have already indicated. It is only possible here to suggest a very little more of

all they represent after the days when English Harold visited the Mount that St. Aubert sanctified; when Norman Henry, second of his name upon the throne of England, held his Court here to receive the Bretons' homage; when Guy de Thouars burnt the "City of Books" that Robert of Thorigny had embellished; and when Philip Augustus aided in the building of the "Merveille," which is the Mount's chief glory.



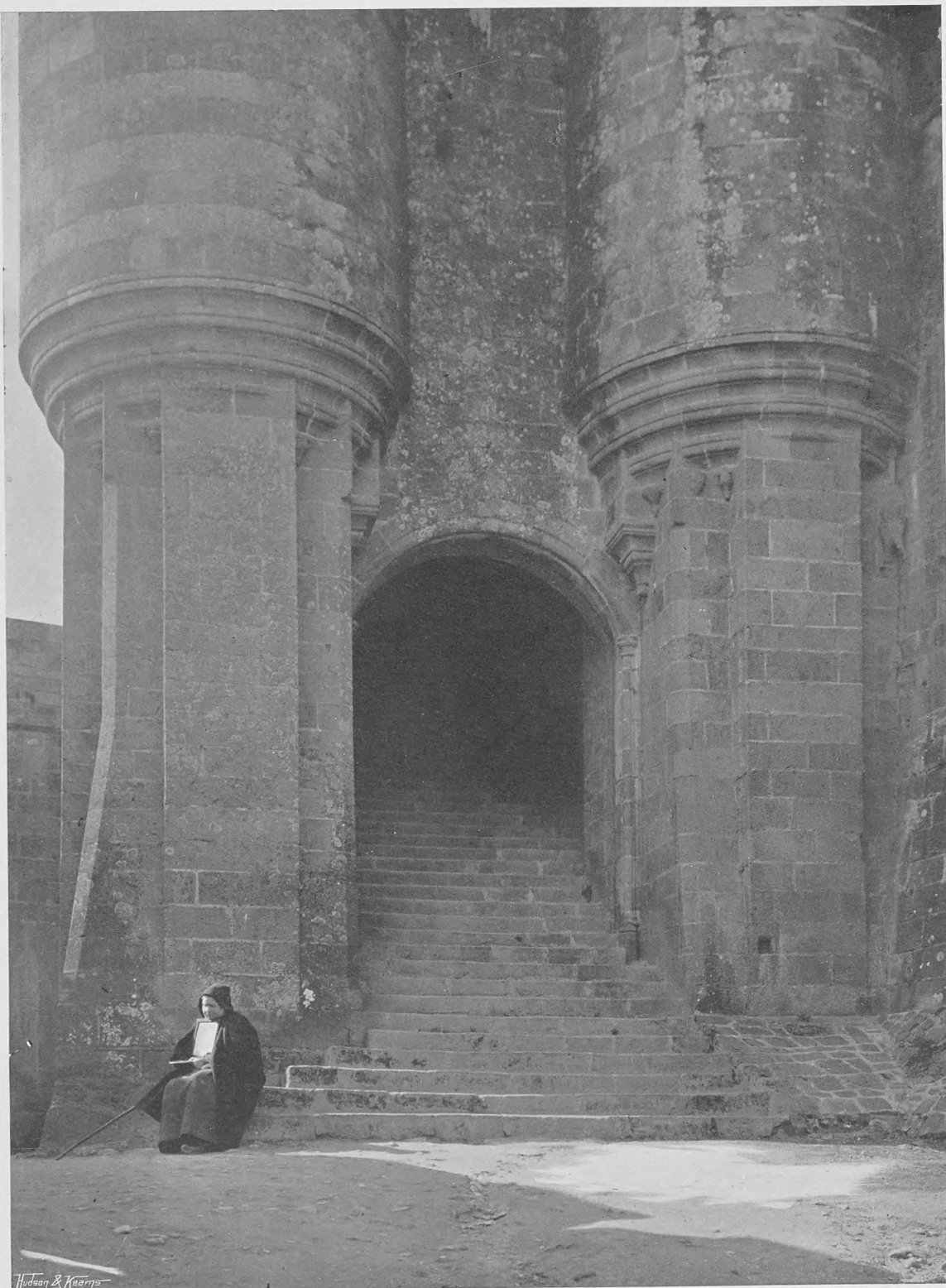
23.—WINDOWS IN THE TRIFORIUM.

After the English had taken Tombelaine, and all the coastwise towns, in 1372, Mont St. Michel still held out alone against all the attacks of Harry V's captains from 1417, soon after Agincourt, to 1423; and again from 1434 until the English were finally turned out of France, after the martyrdom of Joan of Arc in Rouen. It was in 1366 that Bertrand du Guesclin left his wife within the inviolate walls of Mont St. Michel, and his is one of the greatest of the many heroic figures that have trod its stone-shod walks. It may well have been largely owing to his inspiration that Pierre le Roy, Abbot in 1386, completed the defences with the Tour des Corbins, the Tour Perrine, the Tour Claudine and the Châtelet. Only six years before that date the mighty Constable had died beneath the walls of Châteauneuf-le-Randon; and his is the only corpse to which an English garrison ever surrendered. They laid the keys of the town upon his coffin.

After Agincourt, when the daring of the English invaders had notably increased, the strategical value of Mont St. Michel had become proportionately greater. In those days the little river Couesnon flowed to the east of the Mount and joined the streams of the Genets, the Sée and the Sélune, which together formed a useful barrier between the French abbey-fortress



and the English Tombelaine. Du Guesclin had placed a great barrier-stone upon the banks of Couesnon, with the arms of Brittany on its western face, and of Normandy on the east. And though the river has now changed its course, and flows to the west of the Mount, it is still the dead Constable's decision that dominates the vagaries of terrestrial geography. But even the old course of the stream was not sufficient protection in 1419. Robert Jolivet, the Abbot, had Jean d'Harcourt as his captain of the garrison, the lieutenant-general of Normandy, Anjou, Touraine and Maine; and when Jolivet "went over to the English," Jean Gonault took his place, and held out harder than ever in 1420. The Duke of Bedford besieged it both by land and sea. But the Abbot pawned the Abbey plate, and kept on raising more soldiers and getting in more food. In 1423 the English blockading fleet was scattered by a storm; but Bedford sent up an army of twelve thousand men under Lord Scales, and the Earls of Suffolk and Salisbury. The famous Dunois, however, broke through the English lines and brought the Mount timely reinforcements of soldiery and provisions, staying near it until he was recalled to support the campaign of Joan of Arc. But his successor was strong enough to beat off Sir Nicholas Burdett and take him prisoner, and the Bishop of St.



24.—FORTIFIED ENTRANCE TO THE ABBEY.

Malo's ships ran the blockade of the English investing fleet and brought more help to the indomitable garrison. Charles VII himself showed his interest in the defence by granting the Abbot permission to coin his own money, and by sending Louis d'Estouteville to be captain of the garrison. Under this new leader a final and tremendous effort was made by all the countryside to free the Mount of its attackers, and the one hundred and nineteen knights came in to its defence whom I have already mentioned in speaking



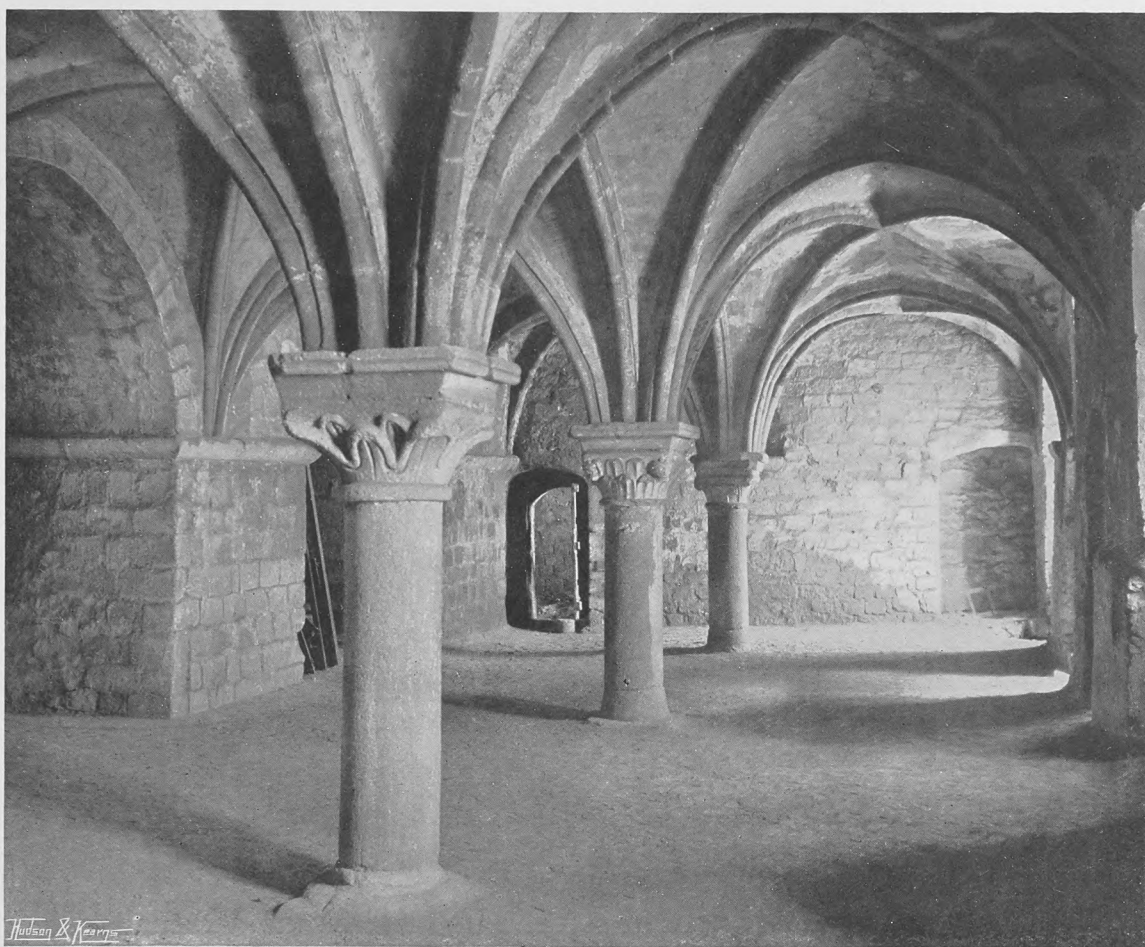
of the Salle des Chevaliers. Their total strength in men-at-arms amounted to eight hundred and thirty-three soldiers, who held the Mount in 1429 against nearly ten thousand English, under Lord Scales and Lord Somerset, the Governor of Tombelaine, whose great attack was delivered in 1434, when the famous bombards were captured, and the invaders were forced back to Thorigny-sur-Eure. In 1444 the English lost the help of their traitor, Jolivet, who was among those responsible for the murder of Joan of Arc. Six years afterwards, their defeat at Formigny drove the English out of Normandy, and the Hundred Years' War was over. The heroism with which the garrison of the Mount had kept its sacred soil inviolate was worthily commemorated by the foundation of the Order of Saint Michael by Louis XI in 1469.



25.—THE AQUILON.



Many other Royal visitors came to this militant sanctuary as the years passed on, Francis I, Charles IX and Henry III among them. The horrors of the Religious Wars left it far from scatheless, as we have seen already in the Cellier de Montgomerie. Just before that tragic episode another Huguenot had endeavoured to get in by surprise, with results almost equally disastrous. Some of his soldiers, disguised, and with their



26.—THE MONKS' AMBULATORY.

weapons hidden, penetrated as far as the great platform of the Abbey itself, and disarmed several of the sentinels in the Salle des Gardes. But they were too impatient, and when they saw their leader galloping across the sand they shouted from the parapet that "the place was taken." The town garrison instantly rushed to the gates and shut them in the horsemen's faces, and his soldiers had to quit the town next morning, thankful enough that they had only to leave their armour and their arms behind them. In 1622 a congregation of Benedictines from Saint-Maur replaced the monks who for so long had served St. Michael's Abbey; and, as we have seen, the change did little good to the old buildings. But the most terrible addition to them was that of the dungeons, which first gained a hideous notoriety by the imprisonment of Victor de la Castagne (known as Dubourg) by Louis XIV, in 1745. Noel Beda, a theologian, had preceded him in these horrible subterranean cells in 1520, and the poet Desroches followed him, apparently for satirising the Pompadour. The famous "iron cage" was condemned by the Comte d'Artois in 1777, but was only destroyed by the order of the Duc de Chartres (afterwards Louis-Philippe), who came here with Mme. de Genlis. She describes, in moving terms, the distress of the concierge at losing so profitable a source of income. In 1789 the monks were finally driven out, and the Revolutionary Government celebrated the era of freedom and fraternity, on what they christened the "Mont Libre," by filling its rooms to suffocation with three hundred imprisoned priests from all the neighbouring dioceses. This was another blow to the architecture of the place. But in 1874 the Abbey was made a "Monument Historique," and its preservation by the State was henceforth assured. The care of one capable architect after another, from M. Corroyer to M. Petitgrand, and then to M. Paul Gout, has finally given to the world a strengthened and restored Mont St. Michel, of which all France is justly proud. Whether in its history or in its amazing architectural achievement, it would be difficult to equal it in any other country.

To my mind the chief glory of the Mount is the "Merveille," and it is worth while returning to its problems for a moment in order to make them clearer to the traveller, who is simply confused, at first, by the mass of complicated masonry through which he walks. It is the best example I know of the logical combination of religious life with military necessities, which is the chief characteristic of the whole place. It was finished in 1228, in realisation of



the plans laid down by Hildebert, but carried out by Jourdain, Raoul des Isles, Thomas des Chambres and Raoul de Villedieu, the abbots respectively responsible for work designed by monks under their rule. This mountain of hewn stone it was that at last permitted the community to have a cloister on the same level as their abbey church.

Its northern façade presents a spectacle of the most imposing majesty and strength as seen from the sea ; and its appeal is made through solid buttresses that rise from solid ground to hold the vaults within ; through openings in the massive walls adjusted for the convenience of lighting the apartments they contain ; through the juxtaposition of blank spaces and more or less decorated masonry without an inch of superfluous ornament, without a yard of stone that is not necessary to the complete design. This means that the powerful attraction exercised by this prodigious building as a whole is due to no unessential tricks of subtle craftsmanship, but to the impression inevitably conveyed by the masterly accomplishment of a logical and splendid task, by the sense of just proportion between all the elements which make up the full conception ; by the application of a sincere and reasoned and practically experienced skill to the development of structural problems encountered in carrying out a harmonious and spiritual ambition. The mere size of this whole mighty block of building makes the necessity for just proportion all the more vital. There must be no sense of exaggerated bulk, no suspicion of unnecessary or dangerous weakness. Each set of apartments had to be reckoned with not for itself alone, but as a portion of the whole, as placed above or below another set of masonry. Each tier of windows had to be arranged not for the convenience only of the special halls they lighted, but as openings in a great, continuous containing wall.

To understand the plan it is necessary to have some other guide than that of your own eyesight as you wander for the first time in what seems a dædal maze of columns, steps and buttresses, and it will be necessary to keep the points of the compass fairly clear in your mind as you move round this pinnacle of granite, or its mighty structures will convey but half their value to you. The entrance is at the east end, slightly to the north of the high altar that is within the apse, and it is guarded by the great gate of the "Grand Châtelet," with its huge semi-cylindrical pilasters, like a pair of giant cannon, on each side of the door. This is part of the building called the "Bellechaise," which clasps the south-eastern and southern angles of the Mount, beginning with its "Salle du Guet" and "Salle des Gardes," with the six stages of the "Tour Perrine," and ending with the Abbot's lodgings. Above the Salle des Gardes is the "Salle du Gouvernement" for justice and for common meetings ; and above the other part are buildings applied to the same purposes as those beneath them, for the lodgment of the garrison and of the Abbot.

Of those buildings, older than the "Merveille," that were set at the north-west angle of the church, the crypt called the "Aquilon," and the "Promenoir des Moines" above it, may be chosen as typical of the twelfth century work, undertaken soon after the fire of 1112 by Roger, the Prior-Claustal of Jumièges, who was made Abbot of the Mount by Duke Henry, son of William the Conqueror. The apartment above the ambulatory, destroyed by fire in the eighteenth century, was used by the monks as their dormitory till the Benedictines of St. Maur, in 1629, for some unexplained reason, took the original refectory in the "Merveille" for that purpose. This early dormitory, which was so placed that the monks could easily pass from bed to the services in the church at night, took the place of a still older one, which had been ruined by the fall of the earliest nave-vaults of the Romanesque Abbey church at its west end. I have thought it well to make this clear, so that the visitor who comes to the "Merveille" may not insist upon a dormitory merely because he has not yet been shown one. It exists no longer.

The crypt called the "Aquilon" (owing perhaps to its north-western site) is on the same level as the "Salle des Gardes" at the exactly opposite corner of the Mount, and is lower than the crypt beneath the choir of the church, known as the "Gros Piliers." Those who remember the scene of the nuns' cemetery in *Robert the Devil* will recognise that the stairway and the pillars from this hall at Mont St. Michel have given the modern scene painter the best ancient model he could have chosen, if mystery, strength and age were the combination that he wanted. The vaulting shows a very curious transition between the barrel (or waggon) type and the lighter and more logical ribbed type in the ambulatory, which is above, for the ribs are





27.—STAIRCASE IN THE "MERVEILLE."

already visible in a rough form, and the vaults have here and there become detached from them, owing to the differing elasticity of the materials employed. The strong pillars, each a monolith, have very slightly carved capitals. They have to bear both the ceiling above them and the ambulatory on the next floor. The advance in skill is very evident immediately you enter. The ribs are rounded and separate, and clearly divide the various compartments of the vaults, diagonal ribs being used. The system of the later Gothic has, in fact, been discovered; but its results are not yet realised, for the heaviness of construction necessitated by Romanesque methods is not yet purified into its elements, as we shall find in thirteenth century work. This masonry may be compared with the thirteenth century Tithe-hall in Provins (Seine et Marne), and especially with the vaults on the first floor. The



ambulatory is on the same level as the crypt under the apse of the church. Under the eighteenth century buildings is the crypt of the old nave.

The rude and solitary shrines that had sufficed for the first hermits who penetrated Europe from the East had expanded both in size and dignity as the fashion of monasticism spread. The rules of the communities of St. Benedict are perhaps the most striking historical fact in the Middle Ages ; and that they responded to a general need is obvious both from the sincerity and from the durability of their results. They may at first have arisen not only from motives of a purely religious asceticism, but from the most human desire for a mere refuge from a world that was in travail with new births, in pain from constant wars and terrors. The miserable inhabitants of many a desolated district welcomed these quiet, steadfast visitors who made their own home safe and opened to every sufferer those charitable doors that were closed before the wicked or the heretic, however great his wealth, however high his birth. The newcomers brought with them, too, besides their faith and charity the sure hope of betterment in the near future, for their prayers to heavenly hierarchies were not unmixed with more material knowledge that brought happiness and comfort to men's lives on earth. Theirs was the only store then visible, outside the Palace, of the knowledge and experience of antiquity. Theirs were not only the manuscripts of the fathers of the church, but the arts of the builders of the churches. They cleared the forests, turned the course of torrents into irrigating streams, and started many a centre of industrial activity which proved a shelter far more efficacious than the broken promises of royal banditti.

Closer acquaintance showed the rude country folk and labourers that these new masters lived a surer life than that of the feudal barons, and were inspired by more lasting ideals than those of pillage or of despotism. In very early years the development of conventual buildings became extraordinary both in complexity and in design. Around the central church were grouped a multitude of buildings for the purposes of the community whose life it gathered up and sanctified. When all this splendour showed signs of demoralising a community that must, above all else, remain austere, the reforms introduced in the Benedictine rule by the Abbots of Cluny and Cîteaux revived all the old possibilities for good in time for that tremendous expansion of religious zeal which appeared in the eleventh and twelfth centuries after the terrible Thousandth Year had passed.

The terrors of that time we can scarcely now picture, even with the help of those hideous details that the chronicles of Raoul Glaber have preserved. As the time approached which was believed to herald the end of the world, men gave up hope. Famine and pestilence, storm and tempest destroyed the land, and thousands died of sheer starvation. The churches of the tenth and eleventh centuries still contain the faithful reflection of the stricken multitudes which filled them. In stiffened attitudes of fear these stone carvings still lift their clenched, thin hands as though imploring death to save them from the agony of an intolerable life. But at last the dreaded year passed by. The stars still shone in heaven, and the harvest followed springtime. At once there was an outburst of religious feeling from one end of Europe to the other, and it swept over Mont St. Michel as it swept over the whole of France from Aquitaine to Normandy.

The troublous times that immediately preceded the reign of William the Conqueror had taught the monks many things besides religion. Many an abbey had had perforce to become a fortress too ; many an abbot had laid down his crozier to take up his sword in defence of the holy things within his keeping. If by the monks many a desert had been made to blossom like the rose, so, within the walls the monks had built, many a harassed population had found refuge from the hordes of barbarian invaders who laid waste the countryside. The temporary inmates of those strengthened sanctuaries came forth with a wider knowledge of what material life might mean that was to bear as good fruit in the future as the moral principles and spiritual teaching they had absorbed as well. The monks themselves looked out upon the world with different eyes. At Cluny, at Vézelay, at Moissac, at Cîteaux they took advantage of the times they lived in and of the exaltation they had themselves created.

History is no drum and trumpet chronicle, no arid list of kings and queens, of births and deaths ; and architecture is no mere table of various styles, with equally unprofitable lists of chronologically arranged adornments. For architecture is the most logical and reasonable of the arts, and it has only lived by the constant necessity under which it is laid to give expression





28.—FORTIFIED BRIDGE ABOVE THE ENTRANCE STAIRWAY.



to the circumstances of the generation which produces it. "Styles" only change because the men who build them differ, because certain practical possibilities of construction either diminish or increase. They are not, as in other arts, the results of independent ideals that can be realised apart from practical considerations; and, therefore, a great building like Mont St. Michel—abbey, fortress and church in one—reflects the history of the various ages which erected it in a manner which would be impossible in the product of any other art. We admire the Elgin Marbles, or "King Lear," not because the age of Pericles produced the one and the age of Elizabeth the other, but because their perfection is a thing apart from their creators—is not the privilege of one age, but for all time. In one aspect Mont St. Michel also appeals to us because the answer given by its many builders to the problems first set in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries remains equally interesting to the twentieth. Its beauty, in fact, is also "for all time"; but it is so for a different reason from that which consecrates the marbles of the



29.—SENTINELS' WALK ON THE BATTLEMENTS.

Parthenon, and the reason is to be found not only in that vital quality of creative architectural growth to which I have already alluded, but also in the facts of human history, of human joys and sorrows of which these stones have been the scene. We cannot divorce them from the multitudinous happenings of their long and varied life. We cannot consider them coldly as so many buttresses, rooms or archways in a given arrangement. They frame the abbey founded by the Bishop of Avranches at the bidding of St. Michael, the slayer of the infernal Dragon, the protector of the dead. As Mr. Henry Adams has so beautifully suggested (*Mont St. Michel and Chartres*, 1913), Mont St. Michel is in architecture what the *Chanson de Roland* is in poetry. You will remember how at the solemn climax of the death of Roland we read of the presence of "St. Michael in Peril of the Sea":

Deus li tramist sun angle cherubin  
E Seint Michiel de la mer del peril . . .



and in the very first verses of the same poem we find a striking parallel with the conquest of England by that Duke William who prayed before St. Michael's shrine and from its Abbot borrowed ships to swell the invading fleet :

Carles li reis nostre emperere magnes  
Set anz tuz pleins ad estet en Espaigne  
Cunquist la tere tresque en la mer altaigne . . .

In the Bayeux Tapestry Duke William's men are shown crossing the sands beneath Mont St. Michel, with the significant legend "Et venerunt ad Montem Michaelis. *Hic Harold Dux trahebat eos de arena.*" Evidently his rescue of some Norman soldiers from the quicksands of the Bay was an outstanding incident in the inexplicable visit of Harold of England to the Norman who so soon was to conquer him, on St. Michael's Day, at Hastings. But apart from either the *Chanson de Roland* or the Bayeux Tapestry, the Mount possessed a "Roman" of its own, a poem written by William of Saint Pair, a village in sight of the Abbey and within the frontiers ruled by Henry II. of England and Normandy, to one of whose children Robert of Thorigny, Abbot from 1154 to 1186, stood godfather. To this King and to his wife, Eleanor of Guienne. on their visit to the shrine in 1158, the poet might well have recited the verses which begin :

Molz pelerins qui vint al Munt  
Enquierent molt e grant dreit unt  
Comment l'igliese fut fundee  
Premierement et estoree . . .

For at least a thousand years that passion for pilgrimages was strong among our ancestors. It has arisen again with a new meaning and with the richer inspiration of a longer history. For to us, to-day, this is the Abbey that defied, alone on all those seagirt coasts, the pride and power of the conqueror of Agincourt. We cannot see those mighty pillars beneath the eastern apse without remembering who set them steadfast in their place. We cannot pass up the winding path towards the Châtelet without hearing the armed echo of Du Guesclin's tread before us. We cannot penetrate from the almonry into the vaults beyond without seeing those wide uneven floors all slippery with the blood of Montgomery's betrayed and butchered soldiers. So that the whole rock of Mont St. Michel seems to gather up its own epitome of life upon this spot ; and the voice of that First Spirit in *Prometheus Unbound* seems to be crying round the bay :

On a battle-trumpet's blast  
I fled hither, fast, fast, fast,  
Mid the darkness upward cast.  
From the dust of creeds outworn,  
From the tyrant's banner torn,  
Gathering round me, onward borne,  
There was mingled many a cry—  
"Freedom!" "Hope!" "Death!" "Victory!"  
Till they faded through the sky.  
And one sound, above, around,  
One sound, beneath, around, above,  
Was moving.

If the plan and structure of the buildings on the Mount may be said to embody the architectural development of mediæval France, so its memories and associations are a no less faithful reflection of the vicissitudes of French history.



## CHAPTER II.

## THE FORTRESS AND CASTLE OF CARCASSONNE.\*

*"Unica Sum Carcas."*

THE castle and fortress of Carcassonne are built on a steep escarpment which commands the road from Toulouse to Narbonne along the valley of the river Aude, between the Black Mountain to the north, and the foothills of the Pyrenees, which overshadow Foix, to the southwards. This splendid citadel, therefore, not only holds a valley which leads from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, but also guards the approaches from Spain into France. Though the Romans preferred the coastwise city of Narbonne as their centre

in this district, the Visigoths who followed them immediately recognised the natural strength and strategical importance of the site, and elevated what had been merely a camp for their predecessors into a fortalice of magnificent dimensions and well-nigh impregnable power, which proved too much for Clovis when he tried to take the place in the year 508. At the end of the sixth century the Visigoths still kept a stronghold which was theirs until their kingdom fell before the Moors in 713, and after that date there seem to have been no important additions made to the fortifications until the beginning of the twelfth century. The nave of the cathedral (B on the plan) was built in 1096 and blessed by Pope Urban II on his visit here to make peace between the citizens and the Viscount Bernard Aton, who had confided the guardianship of the ancient towers to certain among them, rewarded by the high-sounding title of "Châtelains of Carcassonne." But it was not till 1130, under Viscount Roger III, that the castle itself was built and part of the original lines of internal fortification was repaired. I have tried to give some idea of the plan of the whole fortress in a sketch which is partly based on the drawings of Viollet-le-Duc. As far as I am aware, the details now given are printed in English for the first time.

The Visigoth towers were built by Theodoric soon after 436 upon square Roman substructures, some of which were roughly rounded to receive upper works that



30.—THE WALLS OF CARCASSONNE FROM THE FAUBOURG.

\* Monument Historique de France.



are cylindrical on the outside and square within, constructed of small stones cemented together with alternate bands of large bricks, in which round-arched windows open upon the surrounding country. The towers were connected by a high and massive curtain-wall, and the greater part of the whole design is still standing, or may easily be traced upon the inner lines of the double ring of fortifications which have surrounded the citadel since the reign of Philip-Augustus. The main entry has always been to the east, at what is called the Narbonne Gate, the only way by which wheeled vehicles can enter the fortress. The gate itself is surmounted by a thirteenth century statue of the Virgin, and it is approached by a bridge, in which most of the work of the same period survives. The defences of the whole structure are both elaborate and strong, comprising drawbridge, portcullis, flanking towers, chains and every possible military precaution known at that time (see C on the plan and Tower No. 20). It is noticeable that in none of the fortified lines, even those constructed after the beginning of the twelfth century, do we find those stone machicolations which are so marked a feature of Beaucaire or Avignon here in the South, or of



31.—CORNER OF THE WALLS OF CARCASSONNE.

*The Towers at the angle are the Tour du Grand Brulas (outside) and Tour Mipadre (inside). On the inside, to the left, are the Tour du Grand Canizou, Tour L'Evêque, on both lines of wall, and the top of the Petit Canizou. On the right of the centre angle is seen the turret of the Cathedral.*

Langeais, for instance, among the castles we have visited along the valley of the Loire. A very large part of the actual defensive works of Carcassonne was of timber, and the squared holes made for the reception of huge wooden beams may still be seen all along the walls, particularly near the Narbonne Gate, just mentioned; and this means that the whole structure visible in the reign of Philip-Augustus was full of far more complicated detail than the stone fortress that is now stripped of every inch of timber-work.

Each tower, both in the internal and external line, was a solid place of defence which could be separately held, communicating with the curtain-walls, in each case, only by small and strongly barricaded doors which could be instantly closed from within, so that an enemy who might happen to have made good his footing on a line of wall would only find himself attacked by the garrison of the towers on each side of him, and it has been calculated that in each circle every tower had twenty men under a captain, and that at least a hundred men were kept ready to repel attacks on any part of the walls. It may be further remarked that the position thus given to the soldiers would enable them not only to defend the lines from external foes, but also to



cut off any possible treachery within the walls from the least communication with besiegers. And since the great Barbican, now destroyed (D in the plan), commanded the approaches to the river, which was further guarded by a fortified mill (E) and a stone bridge (F), it may well be imagined that sieges might be a very prolonged business ; for there were internal wells at the points marked G and H, apart from the private arrangements of the château, and a system



32.—THE BRIDGE AND ENTRANCE GATE (NO. 20 IN PLAN) CALLED THE PORTE NARBONNAISE.

of subterranean passages, usual in such fortresses, gave access to the outer country and enabled provisions to be brought in until the very last moment, while the primitive ammunition of the time could be provided by stones, or even tiles from the houses within, after the ordinary store of arrows had been exhausted. The enormous forests of the twelfth century made it quite easy to amass great stores of wood for winter, which was necessary to replace defensive

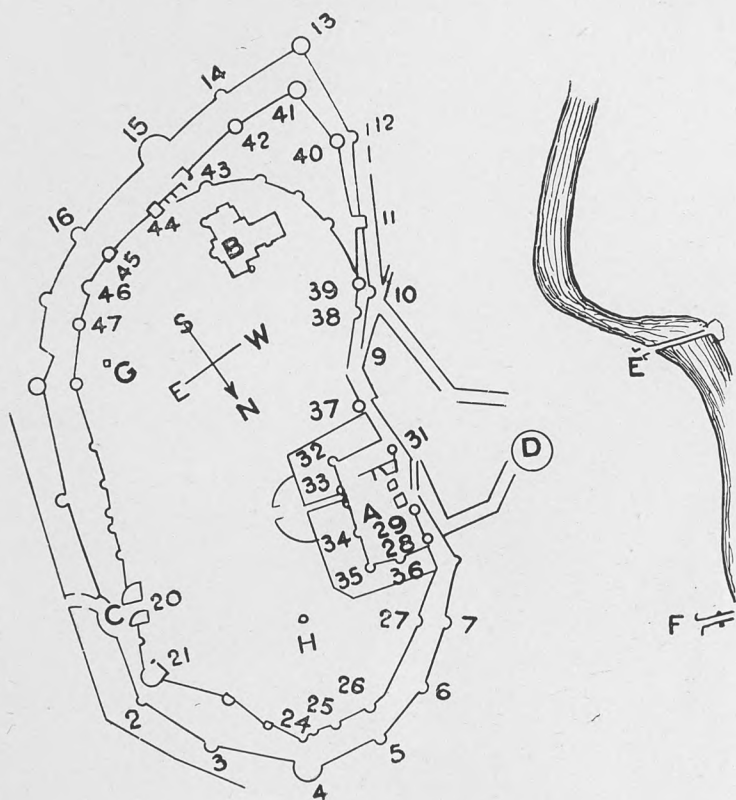


works upon the towers and battlements whenever the besiegers set fire to them. Sapping and mining was a tedious and difficult process against towers which, in the case of the Visigoth constructions at any rate, were solid masses of masonry from the lowest foundations for a long way up.

The château itself (A) shows a somewhat peculiar method of construction on its inner side, where huge blocks of concrete have been used, made of a mixture of mortar and small egg-shaped stones, which has resisted the effects of time and weather even better than the solid stones outside. Its defences to the west are extremely clever and complicated, but are somewhat difficult to understand now that the Barbican (D), which was an integral part of them, has disappeared; and when Roger, Vicomte de Béziers was besieged by Simon de Montfort in August, 1209, these arrangements were far simpler, for only one line of fortifications surrounded the whole city, an oval of some five hundred metres long from south-west to north-east, by some two hundred and twenty metres across, on the east side of the Aude, that would have been strong enough but for the lack of pure water supply which proved fatal.

Carcassonne was attacked because a "crusade" against the Albigensian heretics had been practically necessitated by the reckless proceedings of the Count of Toulouse. The pompous persuasiveness of the Abbot of Cîteaux soon gave way to the sterner measures of Dominic, the founder of the Inquisition, when the Pope was finally roused by the murder of the Papal legate, Pierre de Castelnau, at St. Gilles. But the ecclesiastical avengers shrewdly foresaw that a campaign against the powerful Toulouse himself might unite the whole forces of the South against them. They therefore chose the far more wily alternative of compelling Toulouse to stand by idle, if not actually assisting, while they concentrated their attack on Béziers, and, after the appalling massacre of the Vicomte's men in that doomed city, advanced against his fortress of Carcassonne, which alone stood firm when the holocausts of the earlier campaign had spread terror over all the countryside. The Vicomte sent his son for safe keeping to Foix, and then closed his gates against Simon de Montfort. Two weeks of continuous slaughter followed, and even then the crusading army would not have stormed those mighty walls had not their garrison been decimated by disease. Every family from the surrounding hamlets had fled here for shelter, and when the wells were tainted the last hope was gone. The majority got safe away by the subterranean passages. The four hundred and fifty men who were at last overpowered were wounded every one. Four hundred of them were burnt alive; the rest were hanged; the Vicomte himself was assassinated three months later.

The Albigensian Crusade and the gradual absorption of Provence by France had wider results than the material losses we have just seen inflicted upon the lords of Carcassonne; for



33.—PLAN OF CARCASSONNE.

A, the château; B, the Cathedral of St. Nazaire; C, Porte Narbonnaise; D, the Great Barbican (now destroyed); E, Fortified Mill on the River Aude; F, Stone Bridge over the River Aude.

THE OUTER LINE.—2, Tour de Bérard (or Saint-Bernard); 3, Tour de Bénèzet; 4, Tour de Notre Dame (or de Rigal); 5, Tour de Mouretis; 6, Tour de la Glacière; 7, Tour de la Porte Rouge; 9, Avant-porte de l'Aude; 10, Tour du petit Canizou; 11, Tour de l'Evêque (on both lines of wall); 12, Tour du grand Canizou; 13, Tour du grand Brulas; 14, Tour d'Ourliac; 15, Tour Crémade; 16, Tour Cautières.

THE INNER WALLS.—20, Tours de la porte Narbonnaise; 21, Tour du Trésau (or Trésor); 24, Tour de la Marquière; 25, Tour de Sanson; 26, Tour du Moulin d'Avar; 27, Tour de la Charpentière.

THE CHATEAU.—28, Tour de la Chapelle; 29, Tour de la Poudre; 31, Tour Peinte; 32, Tour Saint Paul; 33, Porte du Château; 34, Tour des Casernes; 35, Tour du Major; 36, Tour du Degré.

THE INNER WALLS.—37, Tour de la Justice; 38, Tour Visigothe; 39, Tour de l'Inquisition; 40, Tour de Cahuzac; 41, Tour Mipadre (or de Prade); 42, Tour du Moulin; 43, Tour de Saint-Nazaire; 44, Tour Saint Martin; 45, Tour des Prisons; 46, Tour de Castera; 47, Tour du Plô.





34.—VIEW OF THE SOUTH-WEST ANGLE OF THE WALLS, HELD BY THE TOUR DU GRAND BRULAS.



they finally stamped out in the Valley of the Rhone that poetry of the Provençal Troubadours which was handed on to Petrarch and to Dante and, through the mould of their imperishable genius, to the lyric singers of our modern day. It may seem curious that the grim towers and bastions of the fortalice beside the Aude should suggest such scholarly associations ; but it must be remembered that the " Gai Savoir " meant to the hearts of Countesses and Queens a certain freedom from conventionality which is fairly accurately reflected in the revolt from authority and dogma connected with the " Albigensian Heresy " ; and the two are almost inseparably interwoven. The lovely old poem of *Aucassin and Nicolette* is a very remarkable proof of the connection here emphasised, a connection which may be traced in many details, such as the selection of the main characteristics of its hero from another Count Raymond, who at Beaucaire also fought for the Albigensians against Simon de Montfort, and was one of the few who ever checked that stern commander's almost invariable success. But the most striking passage in the poem, for our present purpose, is that splendid reply of Aucassin to the captain of the Town, preferring Hell with Nicolette to Heaven without her, an outburst so impossible to understand, unless you realise the close sympathy between the spirit of the Troubadours and the Albigensian tenets, that I must give it here in full, for it is known to far too few, in spite of the admirable translations of the poem by the late Andrew Lang and by F. W. Bourdillon. It runs as follows :

In Paradise what have I to win ? Therein I seek not to enter, but only to have Nicolette my sweet lady that I love so well. For into Paradise go none but such folk as I shall tell thee now : Thither go the old priests and halt old men



### 35.—THE WALLS OF CARCASSONNE.

On the higher inside line the Towers, from left to right, are called *Tour de la Marquière, du Moulin d'Avar, de la Charpentière*. After these comes the mass of the Citadel in the centre.

and maimed, who all day and night cower before the altars and in the ancient crypts. . . . These be they that go into Paradise, with them have I naught to make. But into Hell would I fain go ; for into Hell fare the goodly clerks and goodly knights that fall in tourneys and great wars, and stout men at arms and all men noble. With these will I go. And thither pass the sweet and gracious ladies that have two lovers or three, and their lords also thereto, and there go the gold and silver and the cloth of vair and grey, and the harpers and the minstrels and the Prince of this World. With these would I gladly go, let me but have with me Nicolette, my most sweet friend.

Though a certain laxity in morals among the upper classes was undoubtedly countenanced by the literature of their especial poets, it was still held that any pleasant vices which resulted should be monopolised by the aristocracy, and considered merely as a coarse degeneration when practised by the unfashionable poor. But, unfortunately, the poor were at the same time being encouraged by Albigensian preachers to exhibit a far greater freedom of thought than was proper to their station, and were actually led to consider what was literally said in the Bible as opposed to what was taught them by the Priests. Now, the only language into which the original text of Holy Writ could be translated for them was the language of the Troubadours, and it was therefore only likely that these licensed libertines should in course of time attack the dogmas of the Church as skilfully and recklessly as they had undermined the conventions of society. So we soon hear such expressions (in Guilhem de Figueira) as " God confound thee, Rome ! Thou draggest all who trust in thee into the bottomless Pit. Thou forgivest sins for money " ; or, again, as another of them exclaims, " Ah ! false and wicked clergy, traitors, liars, thieves, and miscreants, your balance is gold and your pardons must be bought with silver ! " The



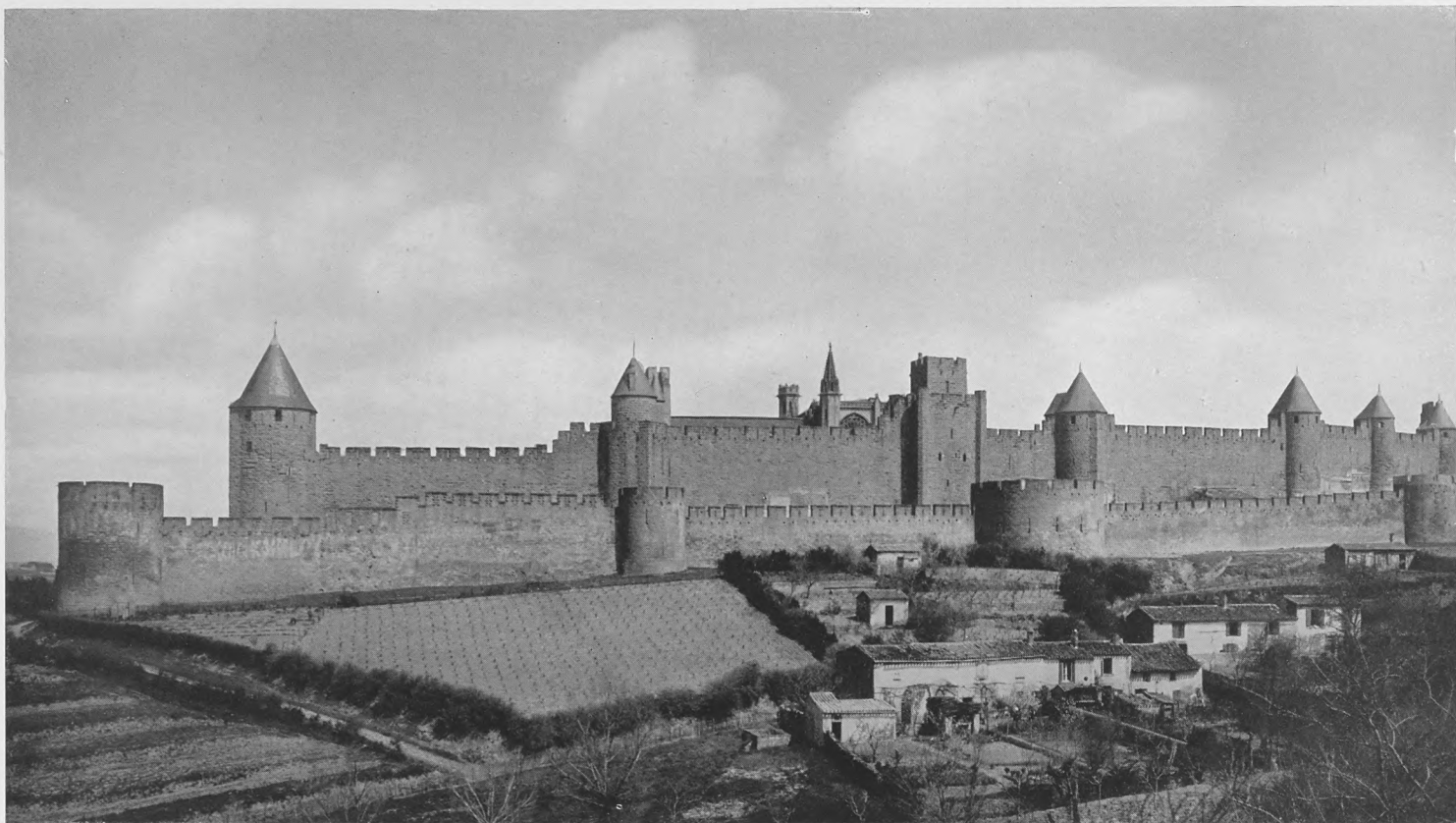
"Established Church" was hardly likely to love such outspoken criticism; and it is not surprising that, when such nobles as the Vicomte de Béziers, the Counts of Toulouse and Foix, Guy de Cavaillon and others openly championed the poets who sang such bitter verses, the Pope's ecclesiastics found it time to strike.

The pagan feasts of Venus and the Bacchanalia of Roman vineyards had lasted through the whole Merovingian period, and they survived in that passionate celebration of Spring-time and



36.—ON THE RAMPARTS.





## 37.—THE DOUBLE LINE OF RAMPARTS ON THE SOUTH.

*On the outside, from left to right, the Towers are named Tour du Grand Brulas, d'Ourliac, Crémade and Cautières. On the inside, in the same order, they are the Tour Mipadre, du Moulin, St. Nazaïre, St. Martin, des Prisons, de Castera and du Plo.*

of Love which was the keynote of the earliest Troubadours. Their first Queen was that Eleanor who was divorced from the throne of France to share the sovereignty of England from the Tyne to the Loire, from Northumberland to Guienne; and her son, Richard Cœur de Lion, raised the romance of Royal lyricism to its highest celebrity. One of the earliest of the poets of lesser birth was Geoffroy Rudel, the sweet singer of Melisande of Tripoli, "*La Princesse Lointaine*." French, it must be remembered, was the language of the cultivated Englishman up to the middle of the fourteenth century, and such singers as Rudel, in the middle of the twelfth, were building up the very language of their fervid lines from sources that were Celtic, Hellenic, Latin, Teutonic and Arabic, one after another, all blending slowly into the earliest Italian (half a century before Dante), in which Raimbaut de Vacqueiras sang the *Tourneys of Les Baux* or composed for Beatrice de Montferrat the famous *Carros* which suggested Petrarch's *Trionfo d'Amore*. Pierre Vidal, too, who died in 1209, carried to such lengths his devotion for Louve de Peinautier (of Cabaret near Carcassonne) that he dressed in wolfskins in her honour, and was hunted across the Black Mountains by the shepherds and their dogs until he was laid at his disdainful lady's feet half dead and torn in tatters. But such ardent love-making can never, alas! be wholly Platonic, at any rate, near the Valley of the Rhone. "No true love," said Eleanor of Guienne, "can exist between wife and husband, and a man may take a second lady to prove the temper of his first." I quote this not as a proof of habitual irregularities, but as an indication of the novel receptivity of lives which, after all, must often have been extraordinarily dull in the châteaux of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when marriage was little better than the amalgamation of two fiefs, when the revolt against unions dictated by high policy alone was as sincere as the revolt against a state of female slavery which is so clearly indicated in those thirteenth century poems of the people, the carvings of the great cathedrals. It was thus that any case of real affection, in the great, was seized upon by every bard as marvellous. It was thus that the irresistible fatality of the natural passion was elevated into the source of all perfection, mental, moral, intellectual. Finally, the quest of the unconquered lover became a delicately arabesqued ideal, a code of gallant precepts, a thirst for lofty enterprise in which the man kept all the hazard for himself. Let us remember this before we cast a stone at those who fell by the wayside. It may be true that such blatant and public immorality as that of



Raymond of Toulouse may occasionally have roused a righteous indignation, exacerbated by his equally violent agnosticism, his open friendship not only with nominal "Heretics," but with undisputed Jews. But let us remember also that, in spite of any such exceptions, Southern France, as a whole, had risen, through the culture of the Troubadours, to a higher level than had been seen along the Rhone since Greece and Rome had spread their arts and influence up and down the valley, and that the cataclysm of blood and fire which swept it from that smiling land was the Albigensian Crusade which fought one of its most famous struggles round the walls of Carcassonne.

If we try, ever so little, to put ourselves in the place of "the Authorities" of that time, we shall be able to understand how inevitable was that Crusade, even if we can never pardon its brutalities. In the Valley of the Rhone the Roman Empire may have seemed buried deep, in the middle of the thirteenth century. Yet even that giant grave was still too shallow for the mighty skeleton of a past that has never wholly died, even though in 1806 the last formality perished of an institution which endured only a hundred and forty years short of twenty centuries after Cæsar had conquered at Pharsalia. Rome, even after the Emperor Frederick II had laid down the titles of Otto the Great, remained the Eternal City. To Dante it was a mere matter of right that the ruler of the World should be the successor of Augustus in the Holy Roman Empire, the temporal chief of the same society to which the Divine will had given the Roman Pontiff as the spiritual head. Thus it was that the Albigensian demand for separation from the Church was a thing unimaginable before and never to be tolerated then, to be warred down as the North was to war down the South in newer communities on the other side of the Atlantic. The revolt of logical reason against the symbolism, the mysteries and the dogma of what was then the universal Christian faith was so full of earnest and unbusinesslike sincerity that it counted death and persecution as a trifling price. The scene lay ready for the inevitable tragedy. The Jews were clustered strong in Montpellier and Narbonne, in Carcassonne and Nîmes. The



38.—THE WEST FRONT OF THE CITADEL.  
*From the site of the Old Barbican (D) now destroyed.*

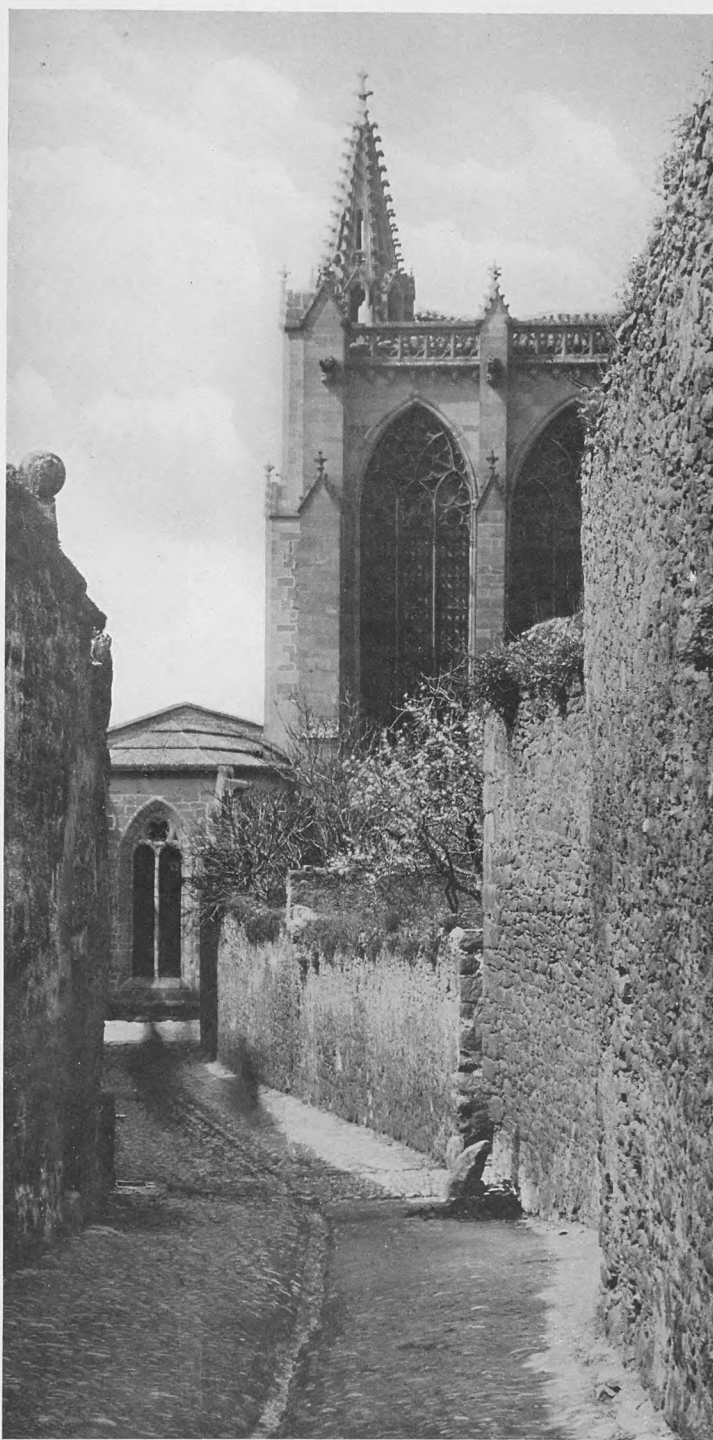


Crusaders had brought something more than Oriental luxury out of the East. Exaggerated symptoms naturally followed the outburst of intellectual exaltation that ensued. The land of the *Langue-d'Oc* seemed marked out as a separate area, in thought, in climate, in associations, from the rest of France; it seemed the appropriate hotbed for these exotic growths of "pestilential heresy." The danger to the Pope and the true Church was outside any orthodox argument. They had to fight or perish.

Archbishops and bishops rallied in full strength to that Holy call, from Rheims, from Sens and Rouen; from Autun, Clermont, Bayeux, Lisieux and Chartres. The cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris sent her Archdeacon Theodosius, a master of siegecraft and of death-dealing engines for assault and battery. That ruthless soldier, Simon de Montfort, captained the armies of the Church. He took Béziers by storm, and put men, women and children to the sword till the great church of St. Nazaire ran black with blood. At the Château de Minerve, near Narbonne, a hundred and forty survivors threw themselves into the flames rather than surrender to his soldiers. At the Château de Lavaur the Seigneur and eighty of his lords had their throats cut, while the rest were burnt alive. At Muret, Don Pedro, King of Aragon, was utterly destroyed with all his forces by the same strong hand that was only stilled for ever when de Montfort fell beneath the ramparts of Toulouse in 1218. The Albigensian Crusade had ended before then; but Carcassonne was still to see another last result of its appalling cruelty.

Raymond de Trencavel, son of that Vicomte de Béziers who had been so foully slain after de Montfort's taking of the city, came back in 1240 to claim the heritage denied him by the King of France, and invested the fortress on September 17th. Coming from the South he had no river to cross, and he knew that the only succour from the King's troops would have to come from the other side of the Aude; so he held the stone bridge strongly guarded (F in the plan) and posted a picket in the fortified mill (E). The rest of his forces he disposed for a double attack, on the south-west, near the Barbican (D), and to the north-east, near the Narbonne Gate (C), at both of which points mines were dug as rapidly as possible.

But perhaps the most critical attack of all was that directed from ground on fairly the same level as the defence, against that part of the walls just south of the Cathedral (B); and the danger at this point was fully realised in later years when the new double line of walls was extended to a point considerably further south and west (towers 13 and 41 on the plan) in order to dominate the plateau beyond. So hotly was the attack made here that a breach of nearly thirty feet in the old Visigoth walls was opened, and the defenders only kept out Trencavel's men by hasty barricades of timber built behind the broken lines of stone and brick. A general assault



39.—ST. NAZAIRE, THE CATHEDRAL OF CARCASSONNE.



was then ordered, but once more the garrison proved too stubborn to be overcome, and four days afterwards the young Vicomte was obliged to retire before the advance of the Royal troops to the relief of Carcassonne.

Saint Louis immediately determined to strengthen the place until it should be practically an impregnable bulwark against the South and Spain. He took advantage of a certain "disloyalty" among those inhabitants of the Faubourgs who had proved their readiness to assist their old master's son, and he swept the ground clear of every habitation round the walls, and built a new town for the exiles on the other side of the Aude, the "Ville" de Carcassonne, as opposed to the royal and fortified "Cité." He then began that line of outer walls and towers which was completed by Philip-Augustus, including the great Barbican (D) and its defences. The whole, much as we see it now, was finished by 1285, and then also a thorough reparation of such of the Visigoth towers as needed it was also undertaken, including those numbered on the plan 39, 11 (which stretched across both walls), 40, 41, 42, and 43, with the curtain-walls that join them. Between the first three may still be seen the iron-barred windows for which special permission was given to the Bishop in a Royal Charter of 1280. It must therefore be remembered that the portion of the interior defences just mentioned was built at a more recent date than anything in the outer line, in spite of the fact that the original Visigoth constructions of the inner line are, of course, the oldest buildings of all; and this recent work may be distinguished by the rusticated masonry of bossed stonework which gives it a different aspect from any of the rest. The fortress was never stormed again, and when the Black Prince raided the valley in 1355 it was only the "Ville" he took, in spite of the offer of twenty-five thousand crowns of gold which its prosperous citizens had made him as the price of safety. John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy, could do nothing against it in 1412. Joyeuse, the champion of the Ligue, was equally impotent in 1584. After that time the whole place slowly crumbled into ruin until Viollet-le-Duc (between 1844 and 1860) restored the northern Gothic of its Cathedral and set it amid its strange surroundings of the older and characteristically southern ramparts.

Those cloud-capped towers, its gorgeous palaces and solemn temples can never, in our lifetime, like an insubstantial pageant, fade. But to my mind, as I revisit them some twenty years after my first travels to that immemorial place of arms, it is not the mail-clad hosts of Simon de Montfort or the desperate levies of Raymond de Trencavel that they recall; it is the passionate faith of Albigensian "heretics," and the poetry of the last Provençal Troubadours; or, perhaps, that evocation of them all which echoes in the verse of Aubanel:

Pesto, lioun, sablas, famino, dardai fou,  
 Avié tout afronta! Li loup, li tartarasso  
 Seguissien trefouli sa cavalo negrasso  
 Car sabien que i'aurié de mort un terro-sou.\*

To the student of history there can be no more beautiful, no more pathetic region in Europe than the land of the "Gai Savoir"; and of her fate the walls of Carcassonne are a fitting symbol. For the sands of time have choked her destiny. She lives but in the mighty ruins of her past.

\* Pestilence, lions, and the burning sands, sunstroke and famine, he had faced them all. Gladly the wolf and vulture followed him and his black mare, because they knew his track was marked by heaps of dead . . . .

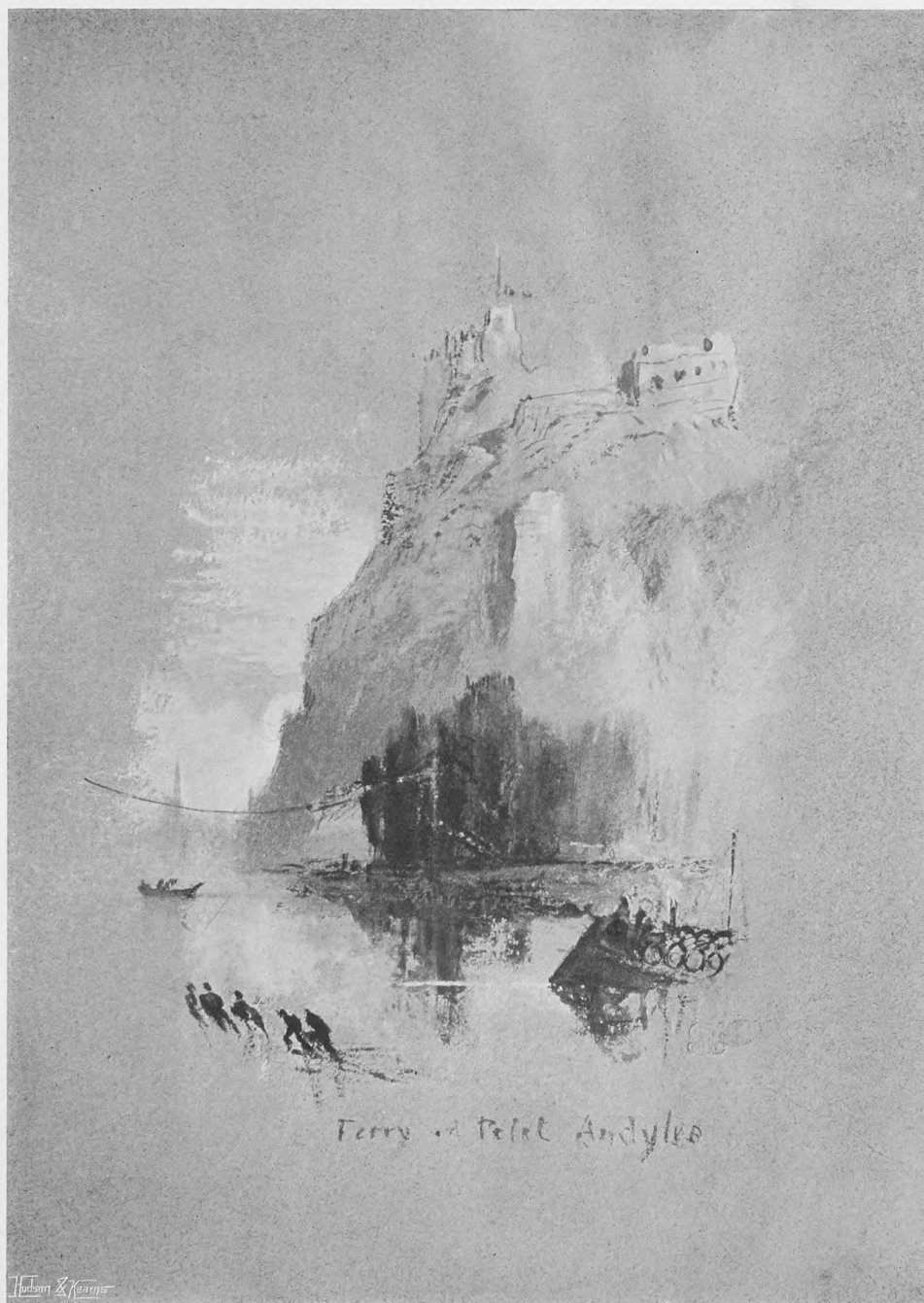


CHAPTER III.

CHATEAU GAILLARD, EURE.\*

THE most beautiful vignette in all that amazing and almost unknown collection of water-colours with which Turner has illustrated the *Rivers of France* is the lovely view of Château Gaillard, which the artist himself entitled "The Ferry of Petit Andyles." It may well have been his last impression of the towers of France along the Seine—this fortress built by an English king, still standing like a rock upon the rock from which it grows. The dark precipice that rises from the river is the height from which Richard Cœur de Lion hurled three prisoners to destruction when his Welsh troops had been beaten in the valley by the French. The place is almost as unknown to English travellers as are Turner's paintings in the cellars of the National Gallery. Yet it was the scene of a tragedy on which the fate of England hung. When Château Gaillard fell it was no fortress merely that capitulated; it was the feudal system that crashed down to ruin. From its conquered battlements the vision of a prophet might have looked across the pleasant vale of Seine and seen the fields of Runnymede.

Turner, looking out beyond those gigantic cliffs of shattered masonry, with the eye not of a prophet, but of a creative poet, saw all that wide sweep of the river, in the semblance of a bow, on which the castle is set like an arrow drawn to the very head. Try as you will, you may not see that vision now. Yet Turner's landscape is more true than any geographical exactitude. He realised what Château Gaillard meant; he knew it for the bulwark of English Normandy against her foes of France. Its rugged stones



40.—"THE FERRY OF PETIT ANDYLES."

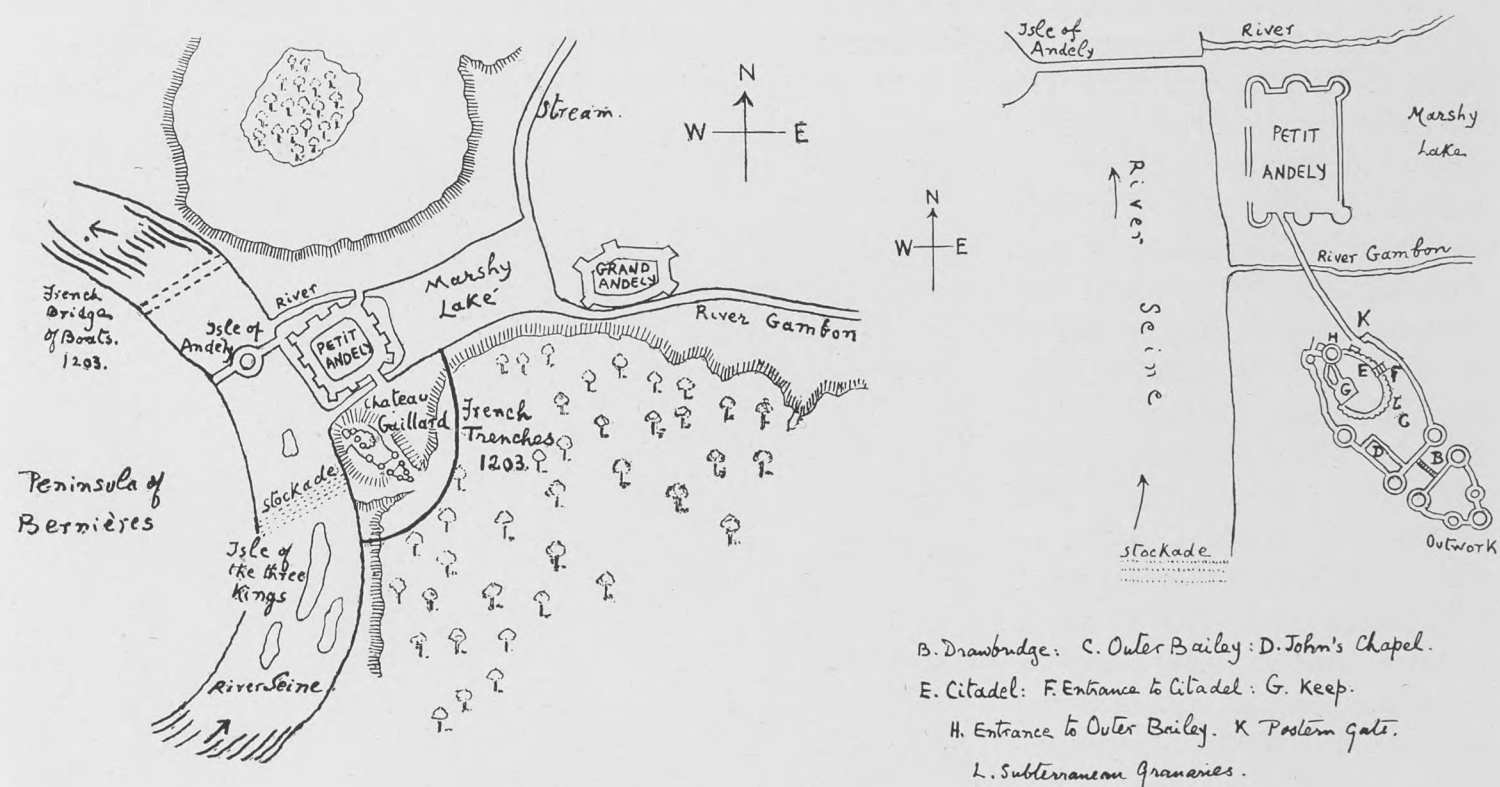
From the original water-colour by Turner in the National Gallery.

\* Monument Historique de France.



have seen more than the ruin of a system, more than the racial change of ownership, which to the calm historian are the chief associations of this place. To the traveller whose heart beats quicker at the touch of personal sorrows or at the call of single-hearted heroism, Château Gaillard was the scene not merely of Richard Lionheart's gallantries, of John Lackland's cowardice, of the triumph of Philip Augustus and his soldiers, but of the horrors of a protracted siege and a bloodstained assault, of Margaret of Burgundy's hapless ending, of countless unrecorded acts of individual military valour to which its time-stained buttresses are the best monument. In this place I must sometimes omit—I must invariably select—and in the sketch which follows of this English fortress in a foreign land I shall pass lightly over nearly all its history except that one tremendous episode which tore the English leopards from above its towers.

The constant fighting between Philip Augustus of France and Richard Plantagenet ceased for a while at the so-called Treaty of 1196, signed between Gaillon and Vaudreuil, by which Rouen and the heart of Normandy was practically left open to the French attack, for the line of the Epte and the stronghold of Gisors had been given over to the enemy. Richard at once realised that he could only hold his lands in future by the force of arms, and the importance he



41.—PLAN A.

42.—PLAN B.

attached to guarding Rouen may be judged from the fact that the bulwark he built against her enemies was the most celebrated fortress of the Middle Ages. He chose its site where the Seine, after receiving the Epte along a fairly straight portion of its course, bends suddenly at Gaillon into a great semicircle to the north, which is broken where the Valley of Les Andelys cleaves the line of cliffs along its banks. The distant hills are crowned with woods; within the curve lies a flat plain of meadowland; round it, broken with green islands, and flashing blue and grey beneath the sun, the Seine bends like a bow of steel as it flows on to Rouen. The portion of the curve picked out by Richard for his outworks I have indicated in the first of my rough plans, for it will conclusively show the skill with which every natural possibility had been utilised to make the place impregnable; and it must be realised that when Richard chose it the only building there was Grand Andely, and there was a definite clause in the treaty that the rock above it was not to be fortified. Yet another difficulty was interposed by the fact that Andely belonged to Gautier de Coutances, Archbishop of Rouen, who had indeed wielded full powers in England for twenty-seven months by Richard's direct orders, but who was none the less determined to uphold to the full all his rights and privileges upon the soil of France. Philip Augustus could be openly defied, and the building was, as a matter of fact, begun before the year





43.—CHATEAU GAILLARD FROM THE SEINE.



was over in which the treaty had been signed ; but the arm of the Church was a very different matter. The resolute Archbishop laid Normandy under an interdict. All religious services ceased, the images of the saints were veiled in black, the statues of the Virgin were laid down and covered with a cloak of thorns, the benefit of the sacraments was refused to everyone, the dead were left unburied, the new-born came into the world unblessed. But amid the universal consternation of the province Richard went on his way unmoved. The sufferings of the population were never much regarded by their overlords. Even the open menaces of heaven passed over the stubborn king unheeded. A rain of blood fell on the fortress and its workmen, says the chronicler, who adds that Richard would have never turned from his purpose even if an angel had come down to bid him stay. At last the Archbishop yielded, being satisfied by the terms of a most excellent bargain ; and the charter which ratified the exchange on October 16th, 1197, is preserved in the archives of his cathedral city, bearing the Lionheart's seal, and confirmed by a separate instrument, which is signed by the name of John his heir. The cross which perpetuated its memory was standing in Rouen until the Calvinists overthrew it in 1562, and the



44.—RUINS OF CHATEAU GAILLARD FROM THE EAST.

monument with which the Cardinal d'Amboise replaced it is in the garden of the Musée des Antiquités.

It was not the precipice of Andely itself which first engaged the attention of Richard's workmen. He began by fortifying the little islet of Andely in the middle of the river to the north and west, and making it the buttressed centre of a military bridge from one bank of the river to the other. At its eastern extremity he built a citadel on shore large enough to become the town called Petit Andely, which was separated from the older Grand Andely (still further to the east) by a morass that was fed partly by a small stream from the north, and partly by the river Gambon flowing westwards to the Seine. The marsh has dried up now, but in the twelfth century it was an obvious defence which Richard gladly utilised. Both streams were bridged, and when Grand Andely itself was fortified the whole of the lower works upon the river level were completed, the river itself being still further guarded by a strong stockade of palisades driven firmly into its bed just below the Isle of the Three Kings and exactly beneath the precipice on which Château Gaillard was to rise. This rock was fortunately chosen not merely from its position above the river, but from its curious conformation among the hills above. Three hundred feet above the Seine, six hundred feet in length by about two hundred feet at its broadest, it projected boldly from the high tableland of forest to the east, being united to it

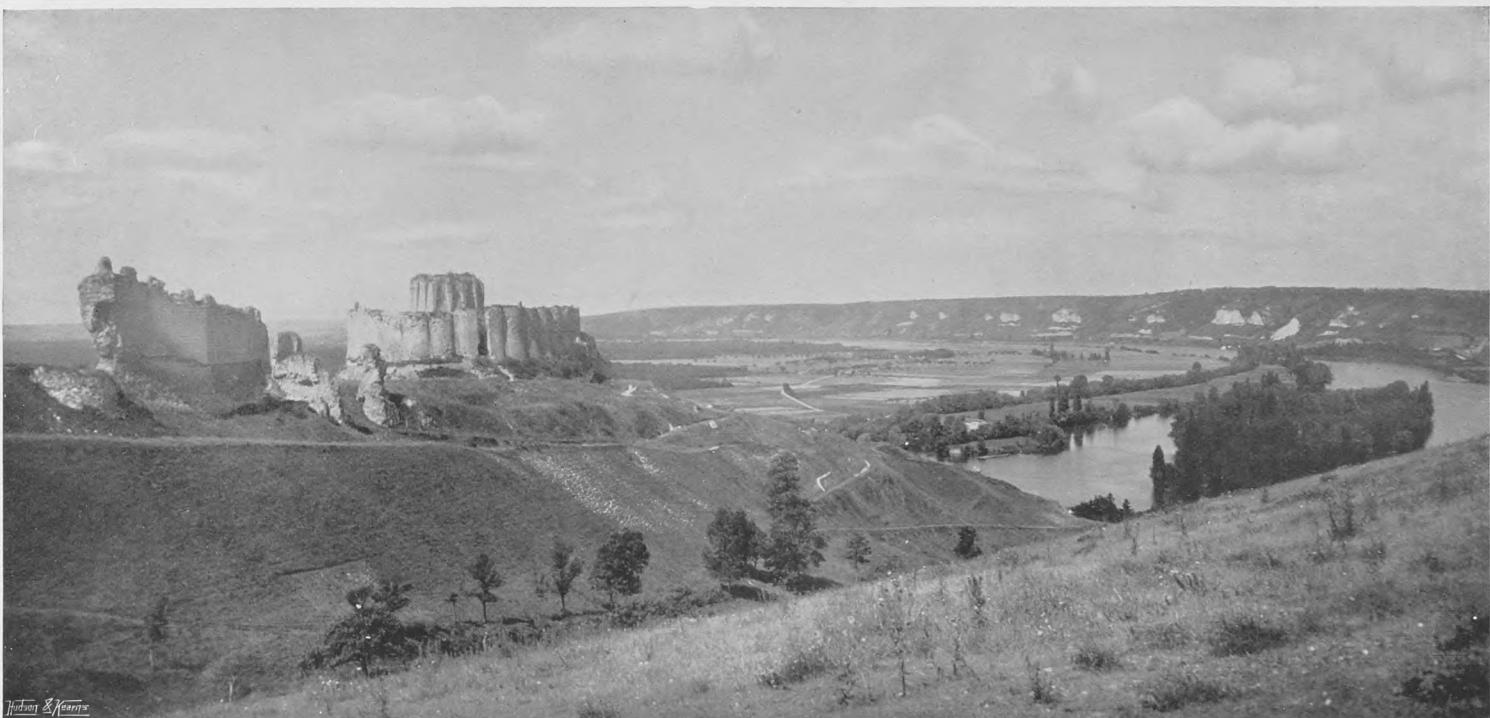




45.—THE CITADEL.



by a mere tongue of land, which was guarded by deep ravines on either side that were still further perfected by Richard's engineers. It is still possible to trace the final fortifications that crowned this lofty site, and, with the aid of my second rough sketch-plan, you may observe the disposition and the strength of Richard's towers and walls. The all-important tongue of land which joined the little plateau to the broad tableland behind it was, of course, the first thing to be made secure. An isosceles triangle, with sides of one hundred and forty feet upon a base of one hundred feet, pushed out its furthest angle in a south-eastern outwork that commanded the approach and was flanked by round towers on either side connected with it by strong curtain-walls. Its masonry is ten feet thick, and even thicker to the west, where a staircase in the protruding angle gave access to the upper works. Behind it, on the spreading base, were two more towers which guarded the drawbridge to the outer bailey beyond, joined by a wall which reaches as much as fourteen feet in thickness at its strongest part. All round this first triangle was a moat with a perpendicular counterscarp cut thirty feet wide into the living rock, with a depth that is still forty feet on the eastern angle, in spite of the *débris* with which the years have filled it. Though the ground of this outwork was roughly levelled, it preserved a natural slope from the south-east to the north-west, which added to its strength. Behind it rose the main

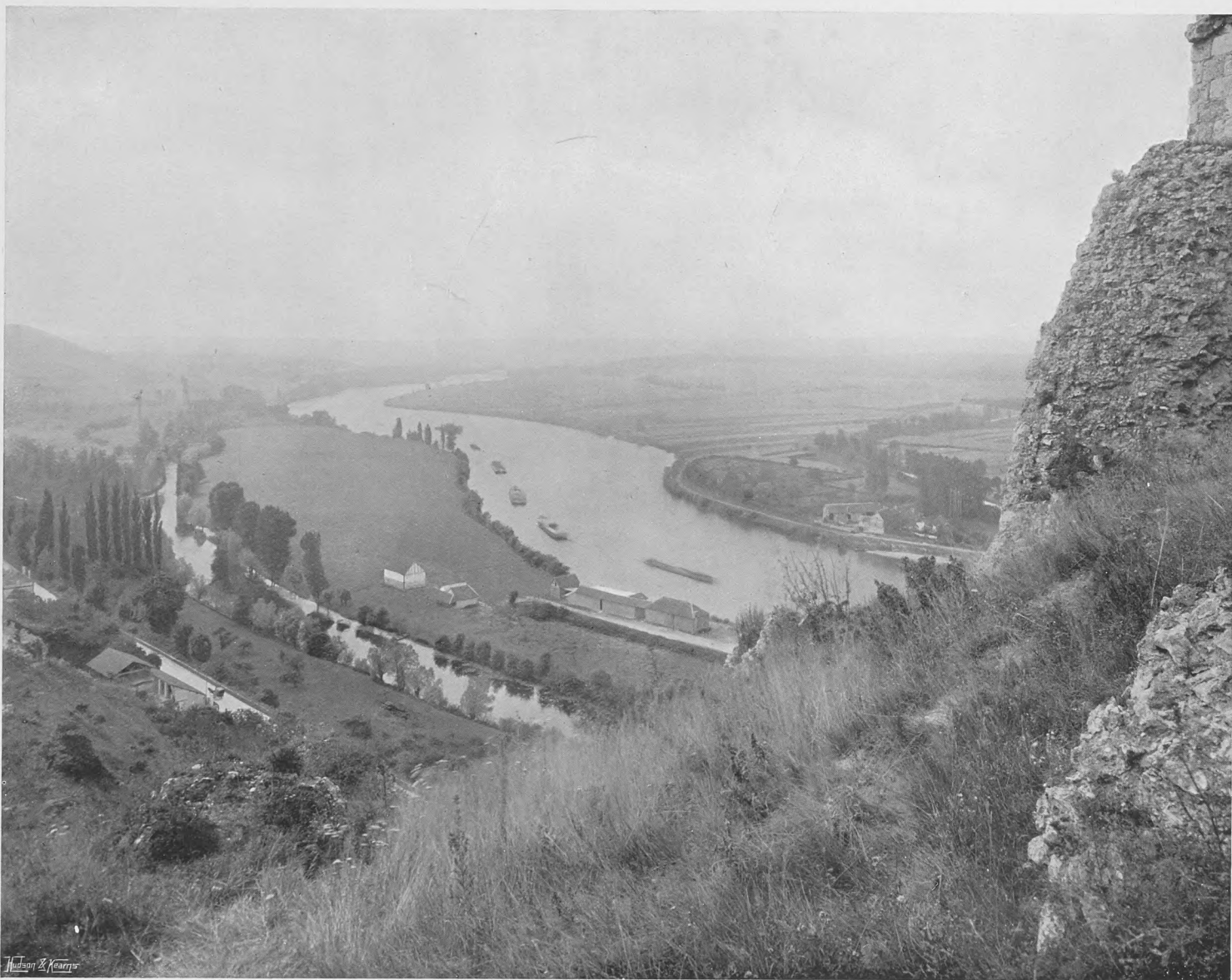


46.—THE MOAT.

constructions of the fort. The western end of the drawbridge was guarded by two towers at each end of a thick wall, almost exactly similar to the buildings at its eastern end. From these towers two irregular lines of fortification enclosed the Outer Bailey and the Citadel. At the south-west corner, overlooking the Seine, is a building known as John's Chapel, erected above the cellars and latrines that Richard originally built upon the space beneath it; and in this courtyard, called the Outer Bailey, there was also a huge well, which penetrated the recesses of the rock down to the level of the river. But all this served only as the preliminary, or protection, to the actual citadel within, that extraordinary mass of stonework which preserves, in its curious arrangement of semicircular buttresses, the most characteristic masonry in Château Gaillard. These semicircular buttresses are really the segments of towers placed so closely together that there is scarcely two feet of curtain-wall between each pair. Some authors have pointed out that this arrangement existed before 1186 in a fort at Cherbourg. But whether it was wholly original or not, the details of its construction are certainly due to the same Royal architect who sketched the whole plan of the general defences, and they are not the least of many evidences of Richard's real skill as an engineer. The advanced outwork was somewhat like the Norman Roche Guyon, but its separation from the Bailey by a moat was wholly Plantagenet, and the careful protection of the curtain-walls by flanking towers was wholly Richard's, for hitherto



they had trusted to their massive solidity alone. It is this same system of flank defence which inspired the semi-cylindrical towers of the citadel; and they are built with the most careful provision against that close attack by sapping and mining which was the greatest danger of a mediæval siege. One delicate point in their construction would be enough to prove that it was neither on curtain-walls, nor towers, nor even on the moat alone, that Richard ultimately depended for security. If so, the towers would have been semicircular projections, straight up and down from parapet to fosse. They are, however, most ingeniously fitted at their base into conic sections of masonry, which permit the embrasures to command the whole line of the building and its moat in such a way that it would be impossible for anyone to work at the base of the wall without being enfiladed by arrows and missiles from each side.



47.—THE SEINE FROM THE CHATEAU.

Even when the citadel was taken there remained a last refuge for the garrison in the huge keep, or donjon tower, on the north-west of the rock, commanding the only entrance to the citadel. This donjon was built with enormous machicolations, somewhat like those of the Palace of the Popes at Avignon, only deeper at their summit than at the base, where they met the spreading masonry of the lower levels of the keep. This masonry was built on a slope so calculated that missiles and rocks hurled straight down from the battlements would bound off it on to the assailants, and as the walls rose sheer out of the solid rock, it was practically impossible (within any reasonable time allowed to a besieging force) to undermine them. To nothing short of famine could that splendid keep have yielded. When I have added that at the point L in my second plan huge subterranean granaries were cut into the rock, lighted from the moat and communicating with the constructions beneath John's Chapel, I shall have completed the tale of the most typical details in a fortress which may well have been considered impregnable

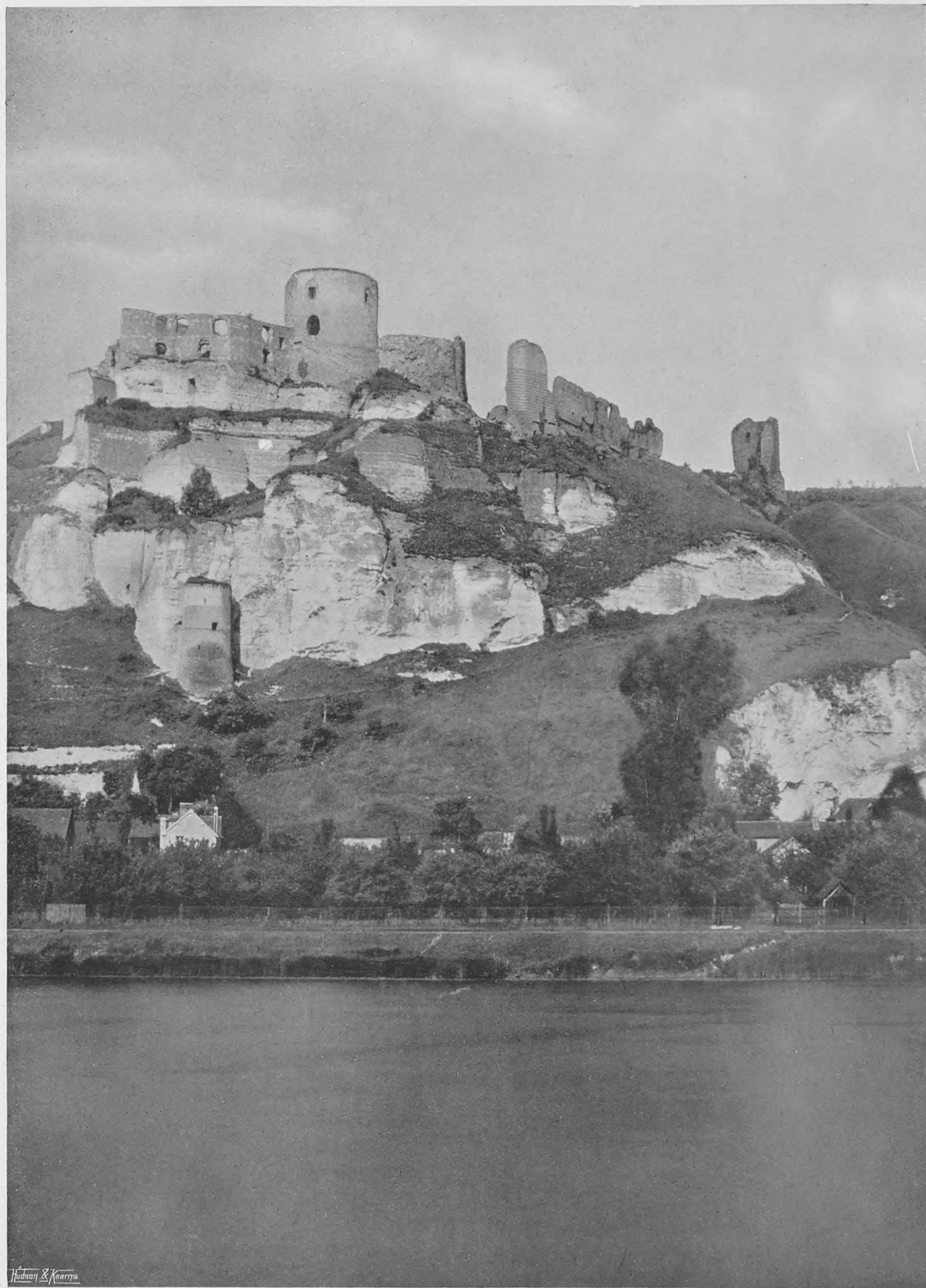


by its creator. In Richard's lifetime it was never taken. It could only have been under the shameful laxity and cowardice of his recreant brother John that Château Gaillard could have fallen.

So great was the energy which inspired the Lion Heart that these huge and expensive works were completed in a year. "I would it were of iron, and I would take it from him," cried the French King. "I would defend it against Philip Augustus if it were made of butter," replied

Richard, and the standard with his royal leopards flew above its battlements until his death. Perhaps I should have an even more inspiring story to tell if either had attempted to make good his boast. But the truth is good enough.

When war broke out between the angry kings, Richard secured a sturdy friend in Baldwin Count of Flanders, who signed the treaty of alliance on the Isle of Andely. The first French soldiers seen in Château Gaillard were the prisoners Richard took in chasing Philip Augustus from Courcelles to the walls of Gisors, and before his death in a disgraceful foray at Chalus a five years' truce had once again been signed. The only other memory of him that still lingers there is his



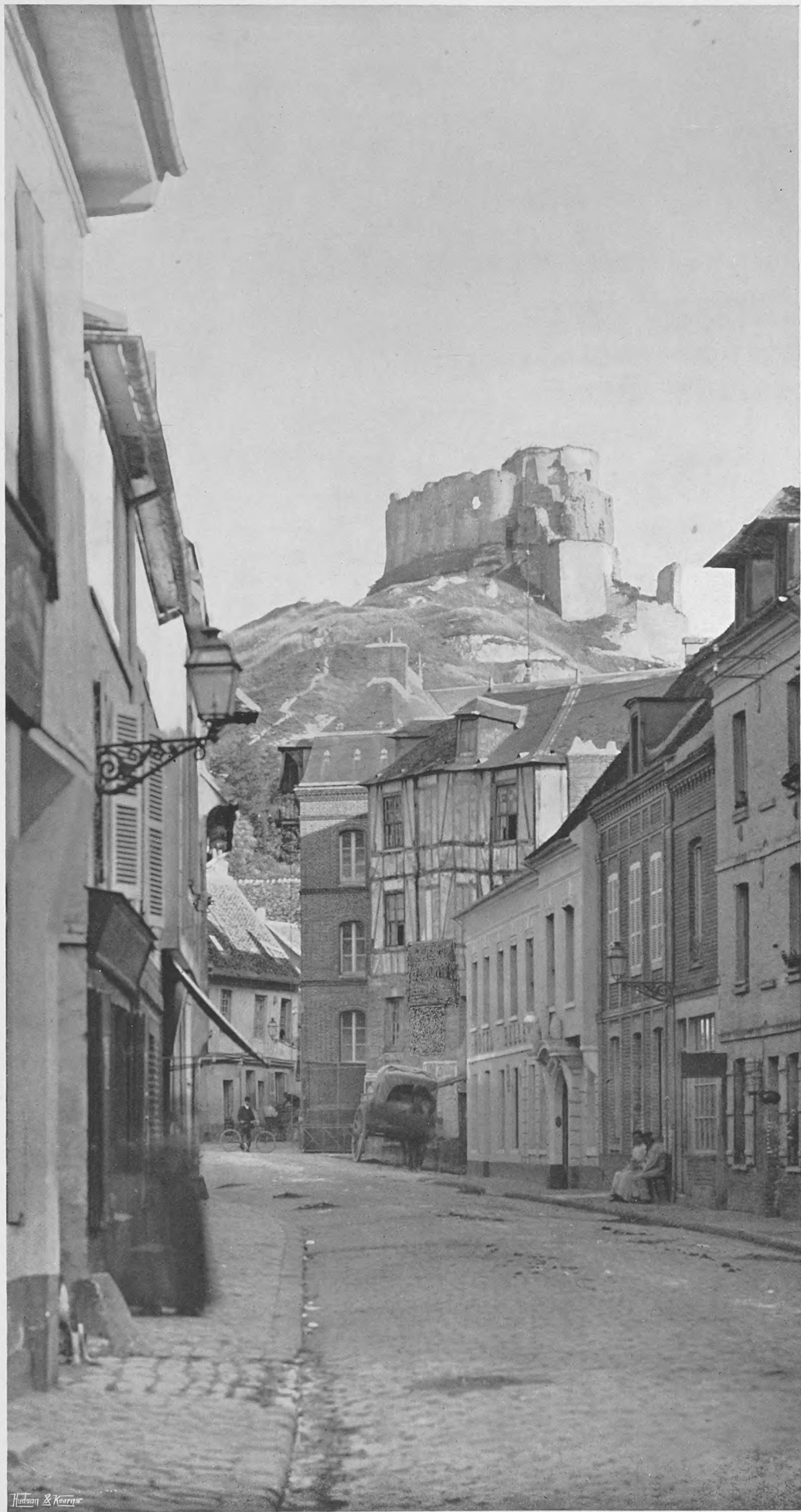
48.—THE RUINS FROM THE WESTERN SHORE.

intrigue with the beautiful Yolande de Gourdon, whom he carried off from Blossac. She was rescued by her gigantic husband, who got into Château Gaillard by a postern gate and bore her home. The first time the fortress ever let a foe within its gates was by the sin of its commander. The second time was by his brother's cowardice and by the bravery of France; but even then there is a legend that the first enemy who penetrated within the stronghold's massive walls was a young Norman peasant girl called Louise, who is said to have been the first



and last love of the unhappy Arthur, the young Duke of Brittany. Romance refuses to leave these strong and sinister bastions even at the grimmest moment of their history.

Philip Augustus was not long in making up his mind to attack Château Gaillard as soon as he knew that only John was its defender. He began by destroying "Boutavant," the outpost of Andely, some three miles to the southwest on the right bank of the Seine. That enabled him to advance to Toeni, and from there to march across the peninsula and fortify the neck of land by a swinging curve of entrenchments to Bernières in the north. This drove John's scanty garrison back on the Isle of Andely, where they destroyed the bridge that joined it to the left bank of the river. The French King then moved off to Arques, as though to distract the languid John's attention from Château Gaillard, and soon afterwards young Arthur Duke of Brittany was murdered. The French campaign became at once an avenging crusade against the assassin, who characteristically stayed behind the fighting line and left Château Gaillard to be defended by Roger de Lacy, the Constable of Chester. "Vir magnanimus et bellicosus," says one contemporary historian of Roger; "Vir audacissimus et armipotens," writes another. He had full need of his courage; for, deserted by his own King, he was to be attacked by the King of France in person, a monarch celebrated throughout Europe for the skill and courage of his assaults and sieges. Even then, Roger de Lacy could have held out if only his Sovereign had taken the most elementary precautions, if only the slightest effort to relieve the



49.—A STREET IN PETIT ANDELY.



strain had been made by the King of England when the blockade had once begun. A sudden attack on Philip's army when it was fully engaged in the *cul-de-sac* of Bernières would have destroyed the whole plan of operations of the French. As it was, they were left to carry out all they wanted without molestation. It seemed as if the ghost of Cœur de Lion on the battlements he loved were the one foe they had to fear.

As has been seen, the fortress itself was the centre of a complicated series of defences, of which only Boutavant had hitherto been taken. It remained, before any real beginning of the siege was possible, to ensure a safe passage for French ships on the river, and to ensure safe camping for French soldiers on the further shore. The first thing to be done was to destroy Richard's stockade across the Seine. While a feint attack was made upon the Isle of Andely, a forlorn hope of intrepid swimmers, headed by a man of Mantes called Gaubert, hacked down the palisade with hatchets and axes until there was sufficient room for a transport galley to get through. Then a flotilla of the flat barges used for carrying carts and horses was ordered down the stream, and others from the west. Four of these latter were so fixed in the river just below the Isle of Andely that a bridge of planks could be built along them, and huge towers of rough woodwork were erected to dominate the fort upon the island.

All this naturally took time, and John at last bethought himself of some reprisals. Summoning William the Marshal, Earl of Pembroke, to his help, he sent him with three hundred knights, three thousand mounted men and about four thousand mercenaries on foot to break through the pontoon bridge by which a large part of the French army had already passed into the Vexin, and thus cut the troops of Philip Augustus into two halves. At the same time Martin of Arques and the pirate galleys of Alain were to deliver an attack on the bridge by water and bring a convoy of barges loaded with provisions for the English garrison. Among the fleet were the boats that carried the three thousand men sent by Baldwin of Flanders. This sounds a well-conceived attack; but it lacked the energy that in those days could be inspired solely by the personal presence of the Royal leader, and it was not made in sufficient force for the importance of the prize at stake. William the Marshal made his night attack, as was agreed, on Bernières, and drove the French camp followers in confusion down the peninsula bounded by the Seine. If it had not been for the delay caused by the entrenchments, that whole division of the army of Philip Augustus would have perished, for the first rush of fugitives broke down the pontoon bridge which joined his two wings, and the English attack could have swept away all opposition into the waters of the Seine. But the sounds of combat and of flight aroused the *élite* of the French force on the eastern bank. Guillaume des Barres and Mathieu de Montmorency rushed to the rescue. In a trice they had put spirit into the French lines, and in an hour repaired the bridge. Pouring across into the plain of Bernières they caught the English in a trap with the French lines behind them and routed the attack. The fleet that was to co-operate with William the Marshal arrived too late to help him. When it did come, with the dawn, Philip Augustus himself headed the eager soldiers who thronged to beat it back. Beside him were such mighty captains as Simon de Montfort and the brave Mauvoisin. From their fortified bridge the French cross-bowmen poured missiles on the advancing boats, which were pelted with rocks and beams of wood from the military engines on both banks, but the two leading barges grappled with the bridge itself. A terrific hand-to-hand combat began, which only ended when an enormous beam of solid oak projected from above sank both the Norman galleys at a stroke. The rest fled hurriedly.

Though two such sudden and terrible disasters had happened beneath their very eyes, the garrison still held on bravely in the Isle of Andely. It was Gaubert of Mantes again who gave the victory to France. With burning embers carried in water-tight jars upon his back he swam to the eastern corner of the defenders' palisade and set it well alight. The flames gained rapidly and soon passed into the fort itself. Fairly smoked out, the gallant defenders had to fly from actual suffocation, and those who failed to fight their way through the French lines were taken prisoners. Philip Augustus straightway occupied the island, and the river was henceforth his own. The fortress town of Petit Andely immediately recognised that its case was desperate, and before the French had time to advance further some one thousand five hundred women and children fled from the walls up the cliff paths to Château Gaillard. They were received



for the moment. But it had been better for them had they faced the wolves upon the plain beneath than trusted to the mercy of the warfare of those bitter days. Their subsequent fate is one of the most hideous episodes of the terrible siege that followed. The sufferings of these innocent victims, and the warfare on the Seine, at just such another curve upon its sinuous course, were almost exactly reproduced when Henry V of England besieged Rouen later on.



50.—THE CLIFF OF ANDELY FROM THE WEST.

At one stroke the French army had taken all the outlying defences to the north and west of Château Gaillard. They quickly occupied Petit Andely with a strong garrison and a new French population. The taking of Radepont, some little distance off, secured the safety of their foragers in the surrounding country. By the end of September, 1202, Philip Augustus



had made up his mind how to invest the fortress on the rock, that "eagle's nest of which all Normandy was proud." The season of the year made the lengthy preliminaries of an assault impossible in the case of so strong a castle. He, therefore, hastened slowly by building a fortified trench in a great semicircle round the tongue of land at the south-eastern extremity of Château Gaillard, a trench which rose from the Seine opposite the Isle of the Three Kings, passed over the plateau and came down again into the marshy lake to the north-east of Petit Andely. Great towers, with spacious moats, were built at regular intervals along this trench; and within them, with guards disposed along the whole line, the French army sat down to starve out Château Gaillard through the winter. Roger de Lacy began to realise that food was precious. He sent out five hundred of the most aged and infirm of those who had taken refuge within his walls from Petit Andely. Seeing they were allowed to pass, he sent out five hundred more. Then Philip Augustus, who had left the place for a while, heard of the thoughtless humanity of his lieutenant and sternly forbade him to repeat it. Warfare can have no mercy, and the last four hundred refugees were repulsed from the French lines with a flight of arrows. Rushing back to the gates of Château Gaillard they were once more driven away with stones and javelins from its walls. The huge, inhospitable moat was their one refuge from the wintry sky below those pitiless ramparts. Ragged, defenceless, nourished only by roots and bitter grass, grubbed from the war-scarred ground, they died slowly in the freezing nights, or went mad and hurled themselves into the watch-fires of the French. Some few, more fortunate, were slain by chance missiles from one side or the other. From time to time, as week after week dragged on, the heap of rags and withered anatomies heaved slowly, and the little spectre of a child crawled out, imploring food. For three months there was still movement in that hideous ravine. Then the French King sent alms to the small remnant that survived, and nearly all of these perished from the shock soon afterwards.

It was now the middle of February, 1204, and Philip Augustus made up his mind that he could wait no longer. He was left an entirely free hand by the recreant John, and so he gradually extended the space upon the south-eastern tongue of land, by filling up the moats upon each side of it, until he made room for his largest engines to approach the angle tower of the Outwork. On a huge scaffolding, built up to a higher level than the Outwork's battlements, he placed a body of his best cross-bowmen to clear the enemies' walls of their defenders, and all the while the filling of the moat beneath went on without a pause. At last the earth and rubbish thrown into the ravine was of almost a sufficient height. Impatient of delay, the advance guard of the French stuck swords and daggers into the chalk soil of the cliff and mounted to the base of the ramparts. There they swiftly dug a cave into the friable soil that protected the first line from the plunging fire of the defenders, and by continually enlarging this cave, as more and more men hurried to the attack, they at last burrowed to the very foundations of the walls themselves. These they at first propped up with wooden beams, and then dug all the earth away between the wooden supports, and when enough of this work had been done they set fire to the beams and rushed back to the safety of their own trenches. They had scarcely reached them when half of the great tower fell with a roar into the moat beneath. With the clouds of dust that rose into the air and hid for a time the whole castle from the French lines there soon mingled the smoke of burning buildings. Lacy had realised that a retreat was inevitable, and he set fire to the Outwork before withdrawing into the Outer Bailey and pulling up the drawbridge behind him. In a few moments the banner of Cadoc, leader of the French mercenaries, was waving on the ruined walls that once had guarded Château Gaillard. But the Citadel itself remained as strong as ever. The only word that had reached Lacy from King John was the Royal advice as to the best means of retreat if he were beaten. But it was the lion heart of Richard that animated the Constable of Chester, and the "Saucy Castle" still held out.

Throughout the story of this amazing siege it seems as if one difficulty after another had arisen only to give some heroic Frenchman a desperate chance of overcoming it successfully. It was so now. Bogis, a young squire, disguised in chain mail, and thirsting for vengeance on the English King, had seen a little window, beneath the building of John's Chapel, which lighted up the cellars and latrines at about the same level as the moat outside. By climbing on a comrade's shoulders in the dead of night, he managed to get through the window and let down



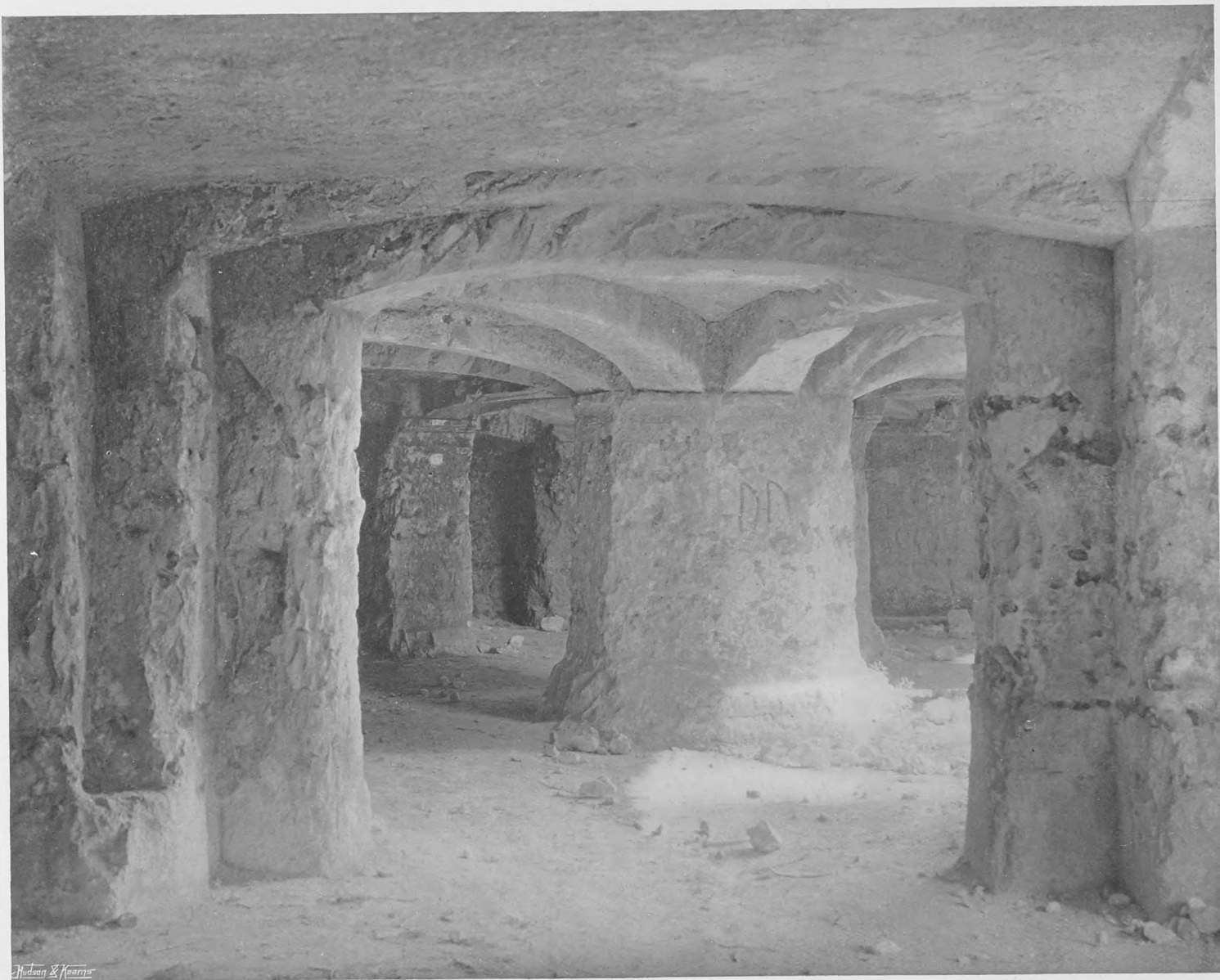
a cord for his companions to come after him. Together they rushed to the cellar doors that opened towards the inner courtyard of the castle, shouting and beating with their swords upon the woodwork. The startled garrison imagined the whole French army had got into Château Gaillard, and immediately set fire to John's Chapel to retard at least the first rush of the attack. Bogis and his few gallant comrades took refuge in the windings of the subterranean gallery from the first violence of the fire, which all the French army were now watching with the keenest



51.—ONE OF THE TOWERS OF RICHARD CŒUR DE LION.



anxiety, and as soon as the flames had abated they rushed across the smouldering embers, right through the blazing doorway, and out to the courtyard. Once there, it was but a moment's work to let the drawbridge down again, and in a flash the French were pouring into the Outer Bailey. The brave Lacy was now reduced to the Citadel itself, that semicircle of skilfully built segmental towers already described, which guarded the donjon keep, the heart of the whole fortress which was yielding so slowly to her enemy. It must not be imagined that the fighting, so far, had gone on without heavy loss on both sides. But the well-fed French could always put a fresh man in the place of every one who fell. The total of the hungry English garrison was diminishing from day to day. Still, it was the fittest who survived, and they were prepared to hold out to the bitter end. The entrance to the Citadel was not opposite to the drawbridge



52.—PILLARS OF THE GRANARY.

from the Outwork (B on my second plan), but on the east side (at F), and was approached by a ridge of rock, which had been left to form a bridge, when the rest was cut away in the excavation of the moat. This ridge was at once attacked by the French, who slipped a protective machine along it and threw forward sappers, who worked in pairs in safety beneath the foundations of the Citadel wall. At first, Lacy held them at bay by a counter-mine through his own defences, which raked their line and did heavy damage to their soldiers and sappers. Then Philip Augustus, deliberately sacrificing scores of men, brought up one of his heaviest engines of artillery, which hurled gigantic rocks against the Citadel gate, and in a short time the effect of its repeated shocks upon a structure already weakened by the mine produced a practicable breach, which fell so suddenly that Lacy and his men were found all together close behind it. They had no time to retire to the donjon behind them, and they fought gallantly for some minutes against the overpowering rush of the French advance guard, which at once



began to pour into Château Gaillard. But there was scarcely room to wield their weapons, and those of the garrison who had not been slain at the first onset were soon afterwards surrounded and taken prisoners, on March 6th, 1204.

The very complication of Richard's defensive works had prevented his garrison from using their full strength against any single point of attack. The network of fortified posts had only served as an assistance to the besiegers, who took them one after another with attacks by overwhelming numbers and went on, strengthened, to the next, being numerous enough to be able to sacrifice large quantities of men in getting their machines and engines to close quarters and preparing the way for the final rush of their full force. The lessons he learnt here were put to good use by Philip Augustus, later on, in other fortresses; and it must always be remembered that even so great a master of siege as he had been eight months in capturing a castle which had been left entirely to its own devices by its craven owner. Roger de Lacy was treated with the deference due to so heroic a captain, and was kept a prisoner on parole in France, whence he returned with his surviving comrades to England at a ransom of six thousand marks in silver. In the previous December King John had fled to London. By July Rouen had fallen. The loss of Château Gaillard involved the loss of Normandy.

England might indeed regret the conquest by Philip Augustus of that motherland of heroes which had taken Sicily and England too; might mourn to see her seven great cities, her strong fortresses, her stately minsters, her Teutonic people in a Roman land, all under the yoke of a dynasty whom Duke William had beaten at Varaville and King Henry had conquered at Noyon. But the loss was England's gain. Château Gaillard led on to Runnymede, her Norman nobles became her

own Englishmen. She could well afford to pay the price of giving up the posts she held across the Channel, for her real boundaries were henceforth to be the inviolate sea.

Of Château Gaillard's later history I need say little more. In 1261 Saint Louis stayed here. In 1314 Margaret and Blanche, the adulterous wives of Louis-le-Hutin and Charles-le-Bel, were imprisoned here. Their story has been told by Dumas in the *Tour de Nesle*; and I must not linger on it now. In one of the dungeons of Château Gaillard the unhappy Margaret paid the last penalty for her sins, and was strangled in her winding-sheet. In 1334 David Bruce, King of Scotland, fled here for safety with his young wife. In 1419 Henry V besieged it, and for a short time the English flag, guarded by the chivalrous Manny, floated again above the castle of the Lionheart. But in 1431 La Hire took it back by assault. Yet once more it passed into English hands during the shifting fortunes of the Hundred Years' War. But in 1449 Charles VII finally drove out the foreigners by the help of Jean and Pierre de Brézé, whose name that celebrated lady, Diane de Poitiers, was to bear later on, as "La Grande Sénéchale de Normandie." In 1562 Antoine de Bourbon, father of Henri IV, came here to die of the wound he had received before the walls of Rouen, and in 1591 the "Vert Galant" in person was received with all honour within its walls. In 1616 Louis XIII ordered the Duc de Montbazou to complete the destruction his predecessor had begun, and from that time onwards Château Gaillard has been a deserted ruin, the neglected monument of forgotten English soldiers.



53.—INSIDE THE WALLS.

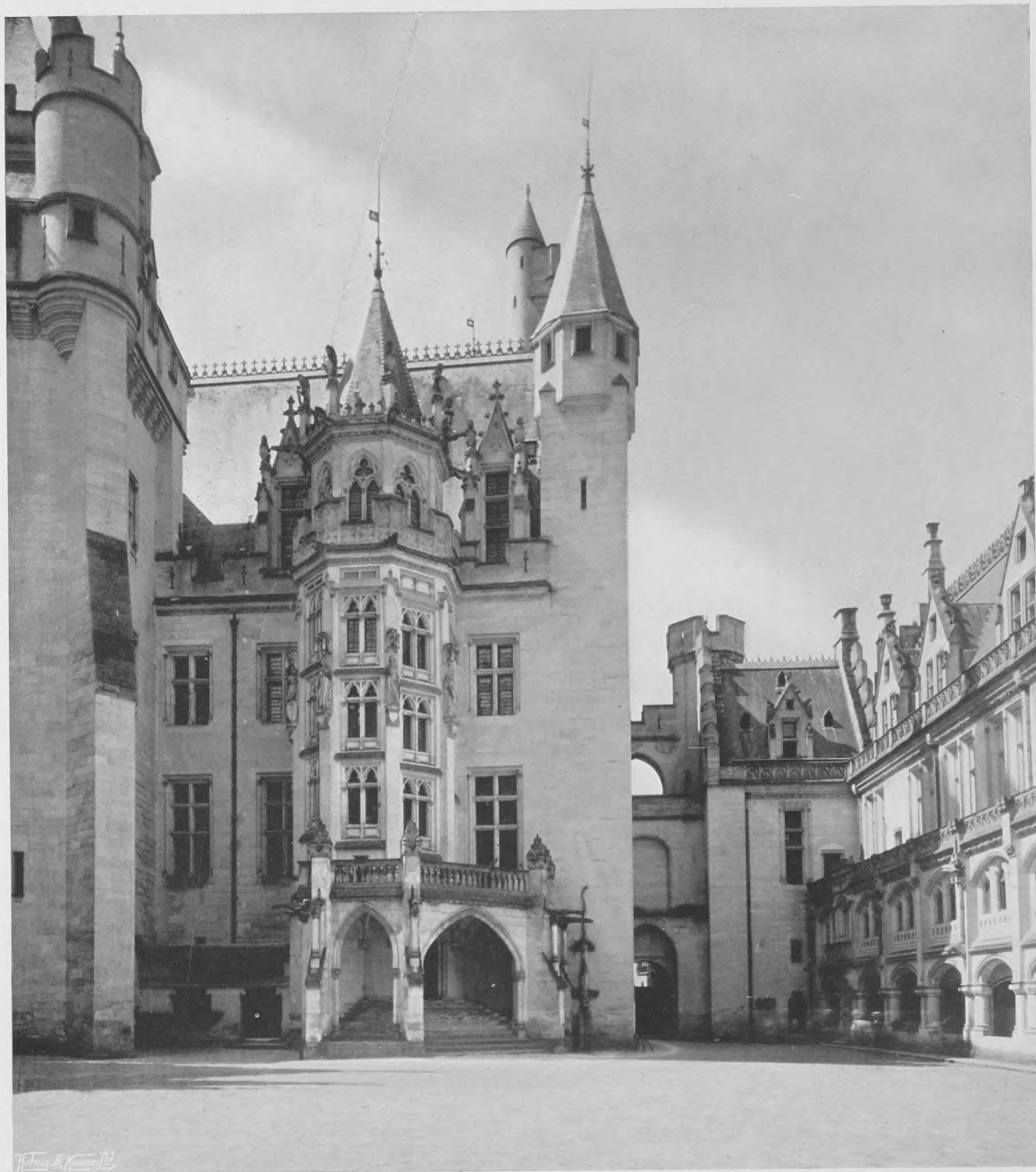


## CHAPTER IV.

## PIERREFONDS, OISE.\*

IN the courtyard of Pierrefonds stands the statue of a knight on horseback in full armour. There are times when Death alone reveals to us what Life has really given. "How big he looks!" cried the poltroon, Henri III, as he stood by the corpse of murdered Guise; "he seems far larger now than when he was alive." The King spoke more truly than he knew. Only at the death of a great man do his survivors realise the multiple hold he had upon the world, the many sides on which he faced existence, the many inextinguishable results he leaves behind. Though nothing before him was exactly what he was, and though his personality can never be reproduced again, he summed up in himself the generations that contributed to

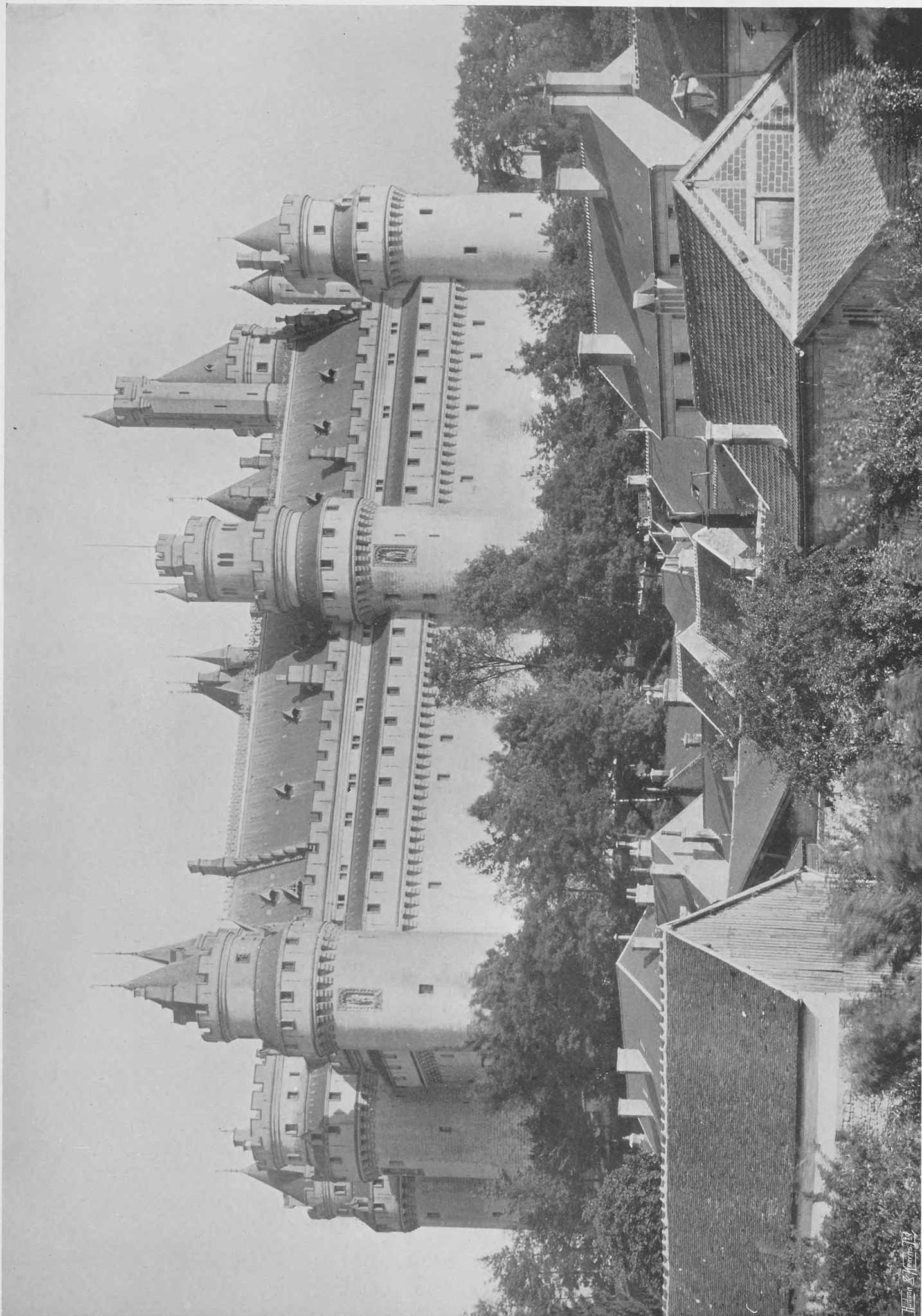
his being, and he lives on in the generations that come after. Obscured by the material issues of our common life, his real character was hidden from our finite understanding by the veil that has been rent asunder in the pangs of dissolution. We remember that he was a man of like passions with ourselves; we pardon, because at last we understand; we love, because at last he stands revealed. With some such thoughts as these the traveller must gaze on Frémiet's noble statue, horsed and armoured, in the courtyard of Pierrefonds. For it typifies the great feudal seigneur



54.—PIERREFONDS: THE DONJON AND ITS STAIRCASE FROM THE COURT.

\* Monument Historique de France.

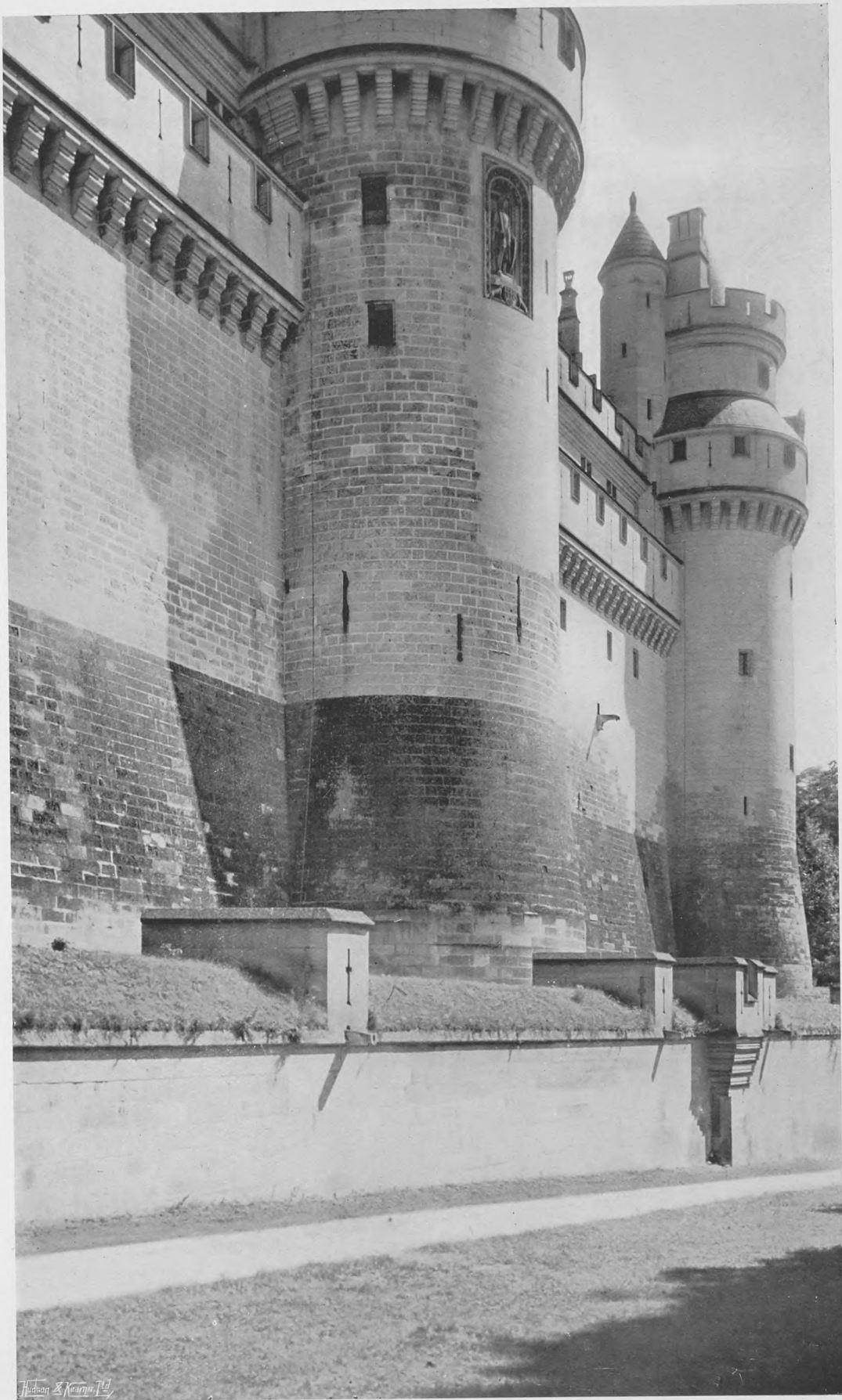




55.—PIERREFONDS.



who built this castle ; and though the battlements he knew have been in ruins, and though its lord has long been dust, Pierrefonds still rears its majestic towers above the trees of Compiègne, and Louis d'Orléans lives still in every true Frenchman's heart, the embodiment and eternal soul of all that stands for France.



56.—NORTH-WEST SIDE, ALEXANDER AND ARTHUR TOWERS.

Perched on the balustrade, behind the knight in armour, are certain strange figures carved in stone. One of them is a monstrous shape, four-footed, beaked and many-breasted—the evil influences of woman. Another, with venomous head and saurian tail, yet fringed about as with a lion's mane, seems hissing with the poison of Italian sorcerers. A third, its mailed head proudly lifted and its mighty pinions drooped at rest, clasps the curved ridge with steel-shod feet and mighty talons — the eagle of feudalism in its strength. It is impossible to look on these and not to see in them the memory of the two main scenes in the short but stirring drama of the life of Louis d'Orléans, brother of Charles VI of France.

Count of Valois and Beaumont, of Asti and Vertus, of Soissons, Blois, Dreux, Angoulême and Périgord, Seigneur of Savona, Coucy, Pierrefonds and La Ferté Milon, Duke of Touraine, of Luxembourg and Aquitaine, and nearly King

of Adria in 1394, the Duke of Orleans in the zenith of his strength was treated by the Powers of Europe as an independent Sovereign. His children were the brave Dunois, that bastard son of Mariette de Canny of whom Louis' own wife said, "Nature has cheated me of you"; John of Angoulême, who married Marguerite de Rohan, and was sent as a hostage into England for his brother's debt in 1412; Charles, the father of





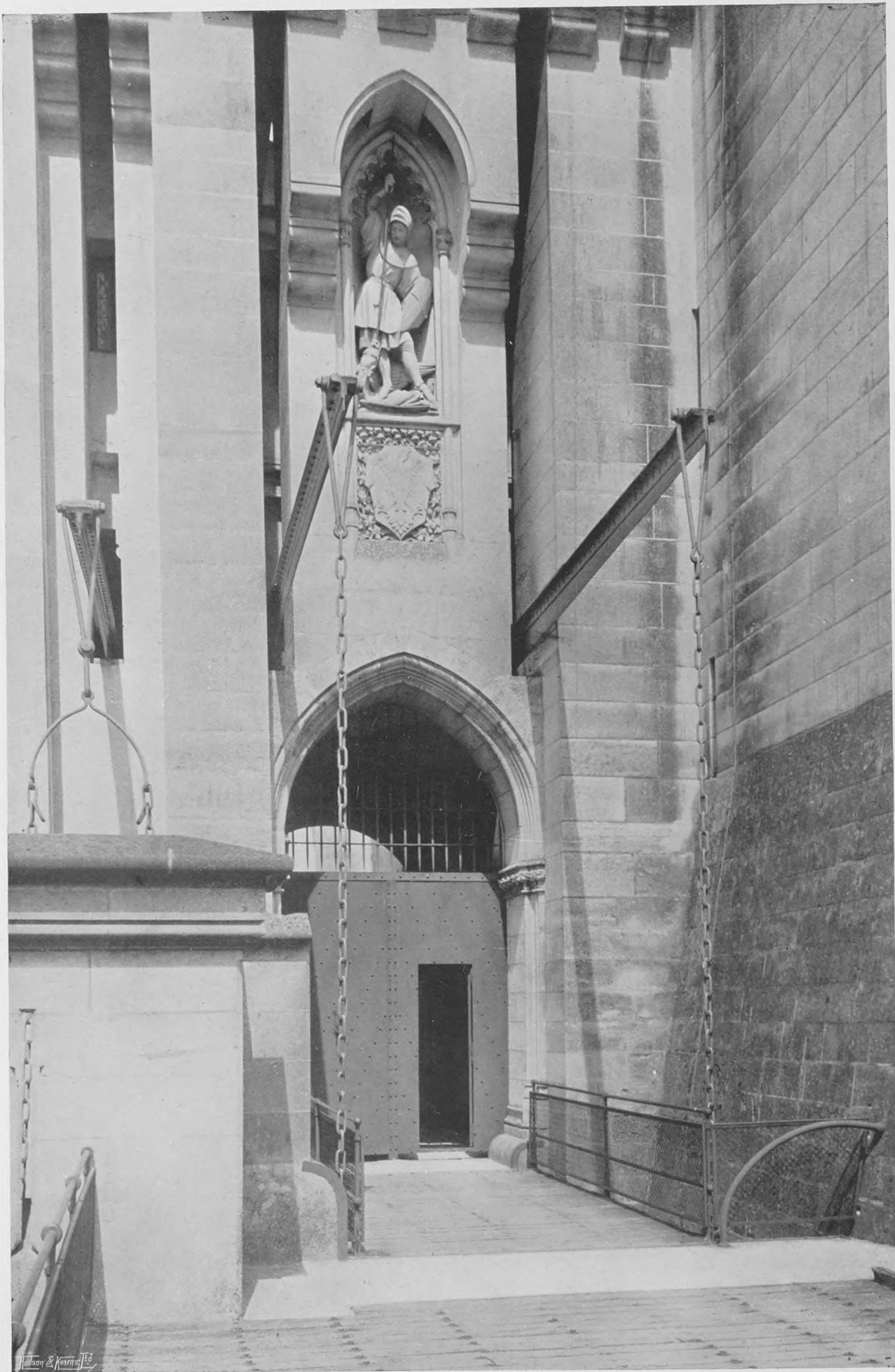
57.—PIERREFONDS FROM THE EAST, CHARLEMAGNE, JUDAS MACCHABÆUS AND HECTOR TOWERS.



King Louis XII of France, the dreamy poet of an outworn chivalry, who was taken prisoner at Agincourt and languished in English prisons until he was released by a Duke of Burgundy, the son of his father's murderer; Philip, a delicate child, who died young; the Princess Isabel; and Margaret, who was the grandmother of Anne of Brittany. Three of them were grandparents or great-grandparents of Henri II of France. Their more remote descendants are living to this day. They were the true foundations of the French Renaissance, and they could scarcely have been otherwise, bred as they were from Louis d'Orléans and Valentina Visconti.

"Greater than Helen as the cause of battles," says Mme. Darmesteter justly of this Valentina, who was born in the abbey of Pavia in 1366, to Giangaleazzo Visconti and Isabelle, Princess of

France, his wife, a married pair of fifteen and sixteen years of age respectively. Through her was handed on to the house of Orleans and of France that claim to Milan which meant so much in war, in culture, in diplomacy, in corruption, in civilisation, in all that the Italy of the sixteenth century stands for in the history of man. She was married by proxy to Louis in 1387, and she is worth looking at as she rides into Melun to her bridegroom two years afterwards, with three hundred thousand pearls of price within her bridal caskets, one hundred thousand marks Parisian worth of plate and seven hundred thousand florins in jewels, ornaments and tapestries, besides her rich inheritance of lands. She was three years older than the bridegroom of eighteen who rode beside



58.—THE DRAWBRIDGE.





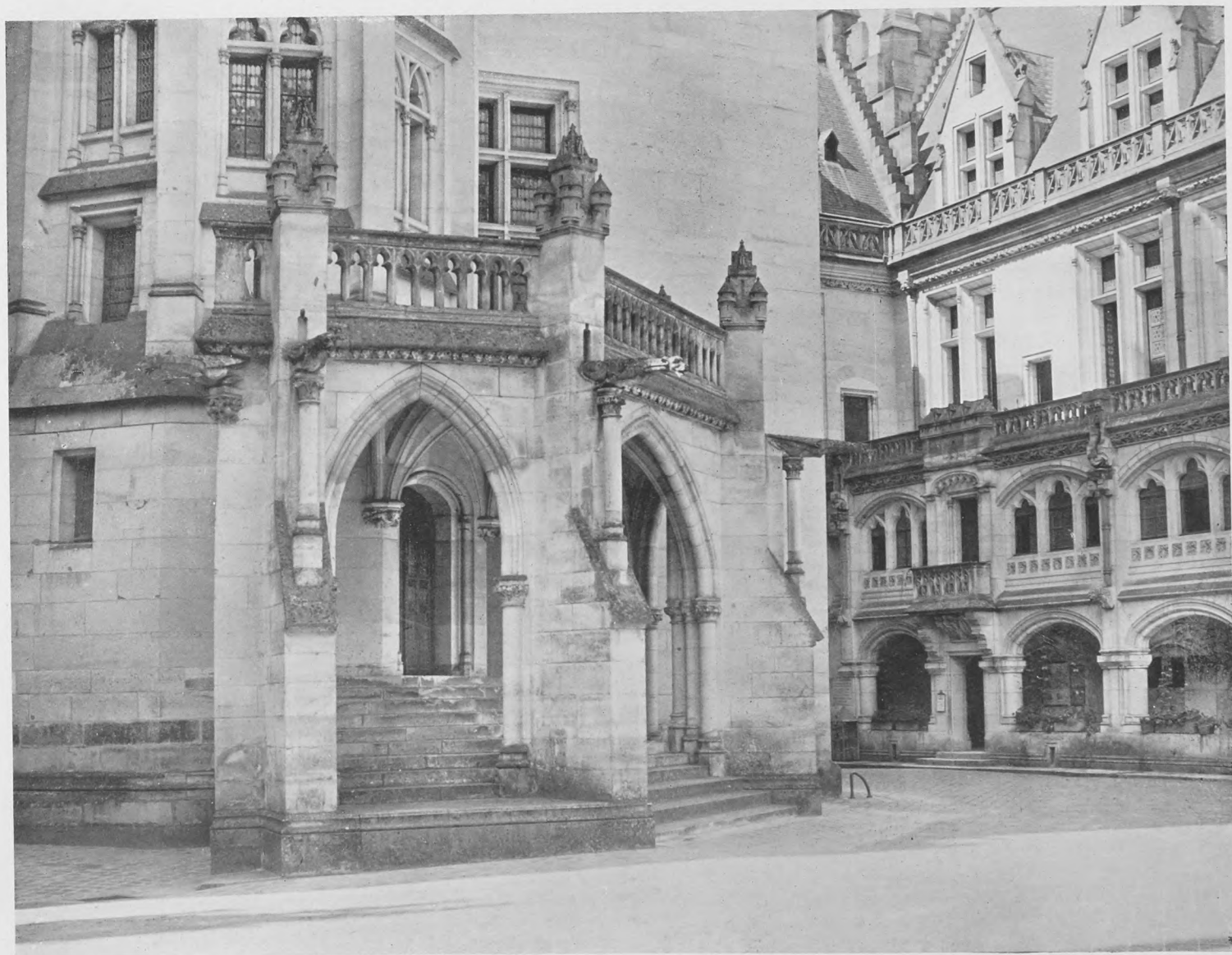
59.—THE ENTRANCE: CÆSAR AND ARTHUR TOWERS S.W. SIDE.

the King of France, the handsome husband who had already made himself a name as "the very refuge and retreat of chivalry." As Louis grew, his strangely varied character expanded more and more. Accusations of prodigality only made him spend with a more lavish hand than ever. Reproved for licentiousness, he kept Mariette de Canny in his house till Dunois was born; he openly made love to Isabel, his brother's pretty Queen, even to Margaret, the other Bavarian, who was wedded to John of Burgundy. He held the love of his own wife from the first day he saw her, and she died of a broken heart when he was slain. For good or evil there was ever the influence of a woman in his destiny, and though he was strong enough himself to dominate all lesser natures, yet he foreshadowed that reign of





60.—ABOVE THE FOREST FROM THE SOUTH.



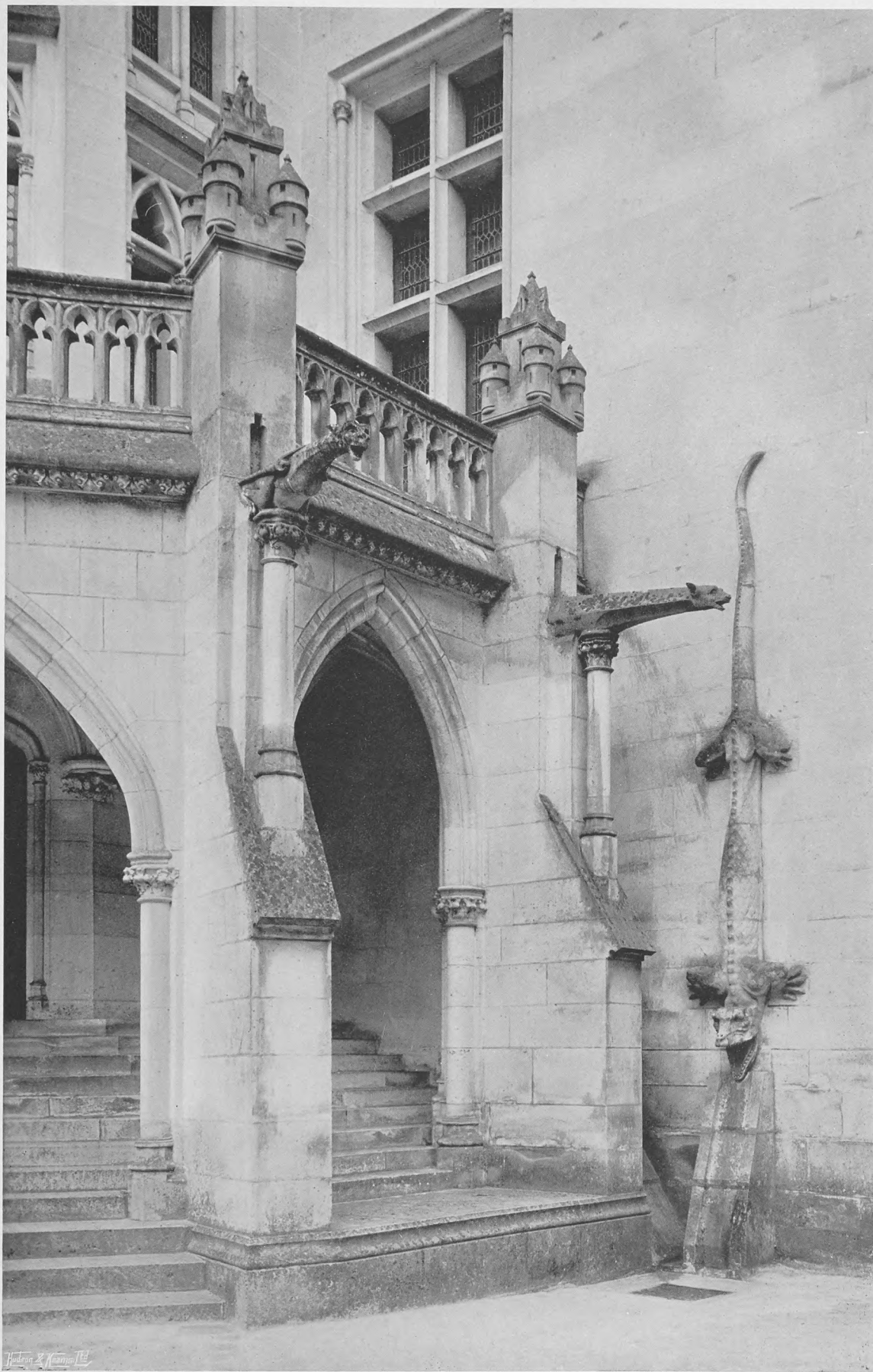
61.—THE DONJON PORCH AND THE HALL GALLERIES.



woman, which was the sixteenth century, which troubled, corrupted, civilised the whole of France from the days of Fredegond and Brunhilda to Marie Stuart and La Reine Margot and on to Scarron's widow, wife of Louis XIV. In spite of every fault, the French loved Louis d'Orléans. They cried out that his wife, his father-in-law were steeped in Italian sorcery and had bewitched the King. They prayed a pitiful God to save them from the Duke of Orleans, who crushed them down with taxes beneath his iron heel and scarce looked round to hear the groaning of the maimed. But still they loved him. For in him they saw that volatile and spacious spirit, brilliant and graceful, yet daring and undaunted, which is the spirit of France. When he lay dead in Paris streets, crushed like a butterfly beneath the ponderous chariot wheel of Burgundy, all France lamented him.

There is a fifteenth century turret that still overhangs the corner of the old Rue du Temple and the Rue des Francs-Bourgeois in Paris. Within the gardens at its back dwelt Diane de Poitiers

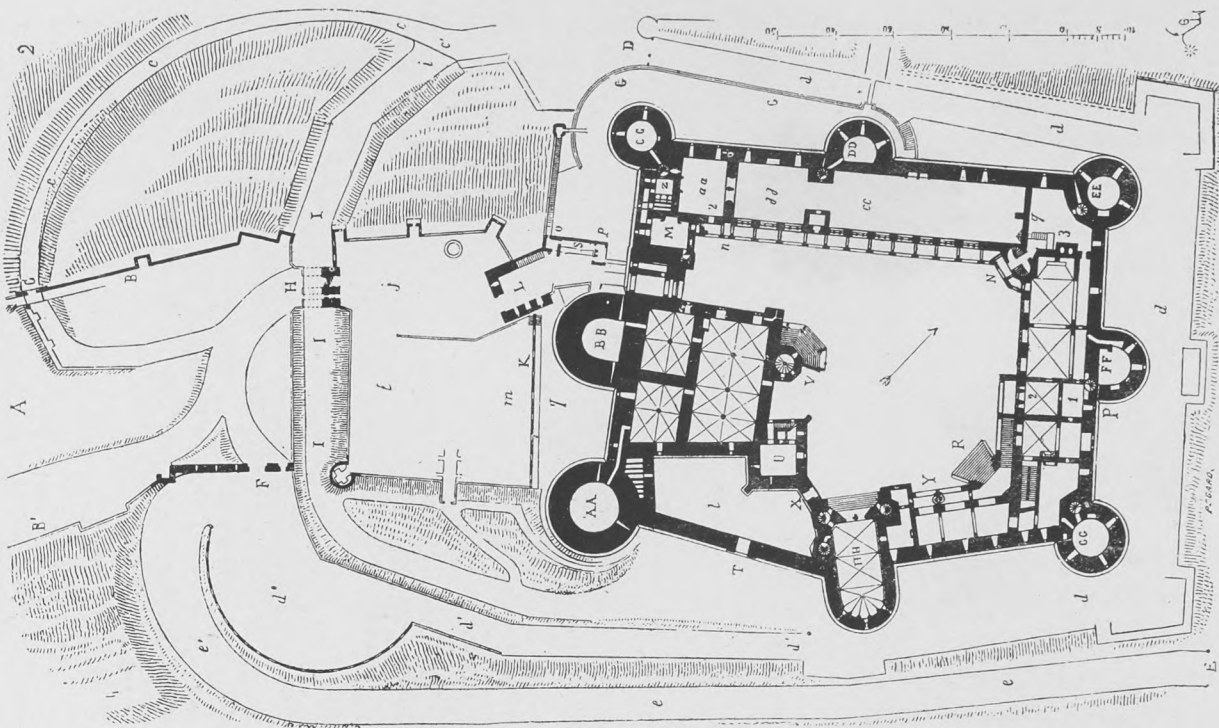
in 1550, and in the Hôtel Barbette behind it slept Queen Isabel on a November night in 1407. John, Duke of Burgundy, had hired a house, called "The Image of Our Lady," in the Rue du Temple, and in it a Norman financier, punished for dishonesty by Louis d'Orléans, waited with his hired assassins. Small need, it seemed, was there for such solutions of the



62.—ENTRANCE TO THE DONJON STAIRCASE (AT V ON THE PLAN).



difficulty on November 22nd, when the two dukes had been formally reconciled at the King's dinner-table, and on the 23rd Louis went to supper with the ailing Queen to try and cheer her after the death of her little baby. One of the chamberlains came hurriedly in to say the King



63.—PLAN OF PIERREFONDS (FROM VIOLET LE DUC).

A, Outer Bailey; H, Outer Drawbridge; I, Moat; K, Middle Bailey; L, Barbican; M, Guard Room; N, North Staircase to Hall Galleries; P, Postern; R, East Staircase; T, Postern; U, Look-out Tower; V, Donjon Staircase; Z, Latrines; AA, Charlemagne Tower; BB, Caesar Tower; CC, Arthur Tower; DD, Alexander Tower; EE, Godfrey of Bouillon Tower; FF, Joshua Tower; GG, Hector Tower; HH, Judas Macchabæus Tower (Chapel); aa, Anteroom; cc, Lower Hall; l, Inner Court.



64.—STATUE OF LOUIS D'ORLEANS ON THE EASTERN STAIRCASE.

awaited the Duke of Orleans. The Duke rose at once to go to his brother. Of the six hundred squires who followed Louis d'Orléans in Paris, he had brought but few with him, and the greater part of these he left at the Hôtel Barbette to wait for his return; for it was only eight o'clock in the evening, and though most of the poorer citizens had retired, the Court was used to later hours. His only followers were a pair of squires, mounted on one horse, a page and a few grooms who held torches to light him through the night. Behind them he rode alone, dressed in a simple robe of



black damask, singing softly to himself and playing with his glove. Jacquette Griffart, wife of a cobbler, saw him passing by as she waited for her husband's return; so did a groom in the Hôtel de Rieux. The woman had turned back to put her little child to bed, when she heard a cry from the dark street below: "A mort! à mort!" She rushed to the window, and saw Louis beaten to his knees. Round him were seven or eight masked men, whose swords and axes rose and fell continuously, even after the Duke lay stretched upon the ground. Then a tall man in a red hood came from the house called "The Image of Our Lady" and looked at the body. . . . "Put out the lights and let us go. He's dead." . . . Another blow from a steel mace crashed on the corpse, which never moved again. The German page, who had done his best to shield the body, fell lifeless with the words, "Ah, monseigneur, my master!" The rest had fled. Since the resurrection of Clisson from just such another ambuscade, it was known that nobles had hard heads; but no mistake was made this time—the Duke's limbs were almost hacked to pieces, his skull was battered to a pulp. On Friday he was buried in the Chapel of the Celestines.

That seemed the end of the great figure typified in Frémiet's statue at Pierrefonds; but we know it was not the end. Of Louis d'Orléans there is Pierrefonds left, if there were nothing else; and I half suspect that by Pierrefonds he might have been content that we should judge him, for it sums up, as all great buildings do, the character and personality of its builder. He sits there on horseback at his door, a mass of steel before that mass of stone, the only inhabitant of a fortress-palace that disdains all lesser inmates. His home was partly destroyed by Richelieu, who ruined so many stately houses from one end of France to the other. By the Revolution it was sold as National Property, and its doom seemed sealed. But in 1813 the great Napoleon bought it and joined it to the Imperial Domain of Compiègne. He saw what Francis I had seen when he exclaimed, with what sounds very like an echo of Monstrelet:

Compagnons, regardez là-bas la croupe de la montagne où vous verrez un chastel moult et magnifiquement coiffé. En est-il ung plus deffendable, mieulx garni de toutes choses appartenant à guerre, et qui ait fossés aussy profonds et tours aussy puissantes!

Napoleon III spent two hundred thousand pounds (three-quarters of which came from his own



65.—GALLERIES AND WINDOWS OF THE GREAT HALL.





66.—THE GALLERY OUTSIDE THE LOWER HALL.



67.—THE FOX IN THE HEN ROOST.

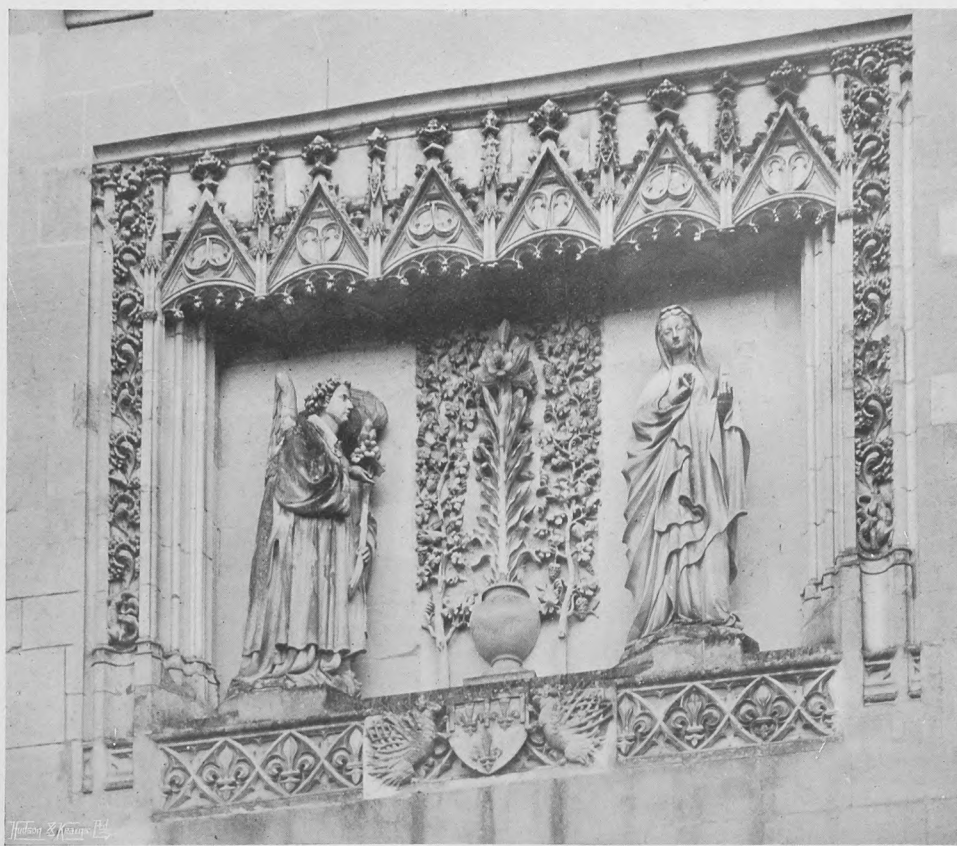




68.—THE FATAL GIFT.

resources) on its restoration by Viollet le Duc, the best man to whom so difficult and responsible a task could ever have been entrusted. In mere bulk, there is still far more of the masonry of Louis d'Orléans than of any other. To the trained eye of its restorer it revealed many hitherto unsuspected details of the military and feudal life of the fifteenth century, that century which produced in France finer examples of this kind of building than any other country had to show. Ruins we have in plenty all over modern Europe. To the vast majority they mean nothing, to a few they may be "picturesque." But such creations as Mont Saint Michel, Carcassonne, or Pierrefonds are the records of the age that built them and the monuments of a life that should never be forgotten. In Pierrefonds, for example, may be traced all those details of construction which developed into the French Renaissance of the wing of Francis I at Blois. In Pierrefonds you may see in a more striking form than Josselin, because we are nearer Paris and nearer the sixteenth century, the evolution from the fortress into the dwelling-house, from the Royal stronghold into the palace of the prince; its machicolated towers are the exact foreshadowing of the deep Italian cornice, the overhanging line of jewelled masonry that crowned the later châteaux on the sunny banks of Loire.

To give some idea of the exactitude with which Viollet le Duc could be guided by the walls on which he first began his labours, I may add that the whole external shell of the great donjon in the courtyard was perfectly preserved, with the height of every storey clearly



69.—THE ANNUNCIATION.





70.—LOUIS D'ORLEANS KNIGHTED.

marked. Fragments of its entrance gateway were found in the moat and fitted into the original cuttings in the thickness of the old wall. The stonework for receiving the treads of various staircases was still nearly perfect. The "oubliettes" of Pierrefonds in the Tower of King Arthur, at the angle on the left hand of the entrance, are almost the only genuine constructions of the kind I know. Where very little was left above ground the foundations easily discoverable beneath the soil preserved the whole plan of the upper masonry. The framework of the original windows was found among the *débris* and was all replaced in its original positions. Even the slope of the roofs was often shown in the lines left upon adjacent towers and walls. Every possible indication of the original workmanship was preserved with the greatest reverence and used with the most careful accuracy. All new work was modelled on the inspiration of the old.

The architect of Louis d'Orléans had a clear plan in his head, which he carried out



71.—THE WICKEDNESS OF WOMAN.

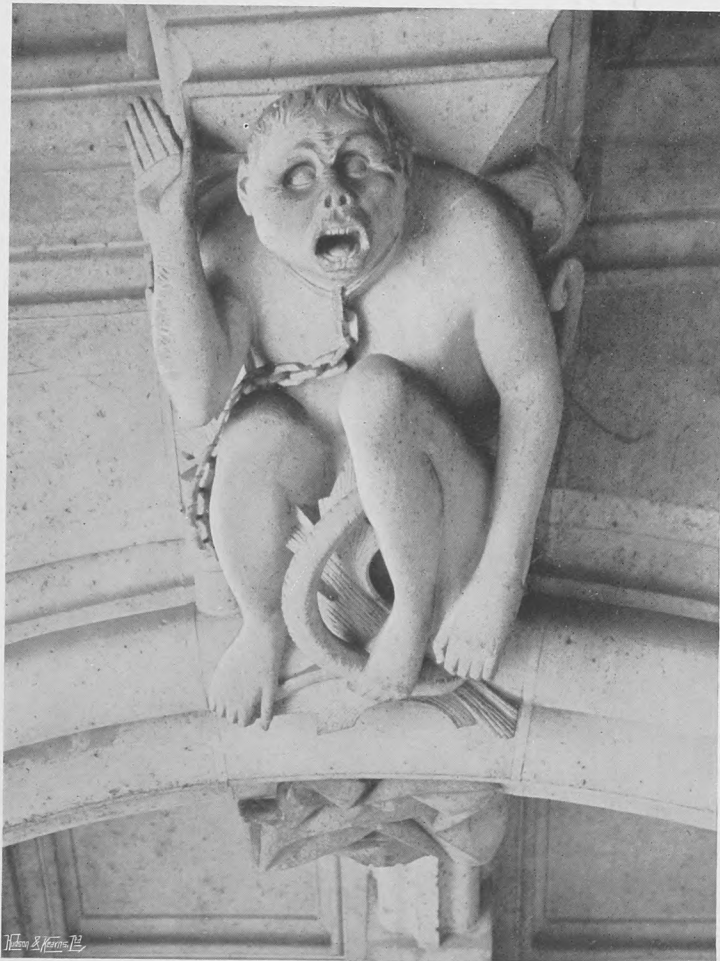




72.—THE POISONERS OF ITALY.



73.—THE EAGLE OF PIERREFONDS.



74.—EVIL ENCHAINED.



75.—WINGED BULL ON STAIRWAY.



with the most artistic and logical completeness. On the ground floor were storehouses and magazines with as few exits and entrances as possible. The external walls of the towers, especially on the side of the entrance, were hugely thick and almost solid up to the height of the entrenchments beyond, in order to resist all possibility of subterranean mining. Every gate was doubly defended, every entrance from without led through a guarded angle to its second postern. But the mistakes which led—as I explained in a previous chapter—to the downfall of so complicated a fort as Château Gaillard were not repeated by the greater knowledge which built Pierrefonds. Here a relatively small number of men was quite sufficient to guard the whole line of defence, and by careful planning it was possible to bring soldiers suddenly from one point to another and concentrate against an unforeseen attack. The comparative smallness of the garrison necessary was also valuable in another way. The feudal overlord was not invariably able to collect enough of his own



77.—THE EAGLE OF FEUDALISM.



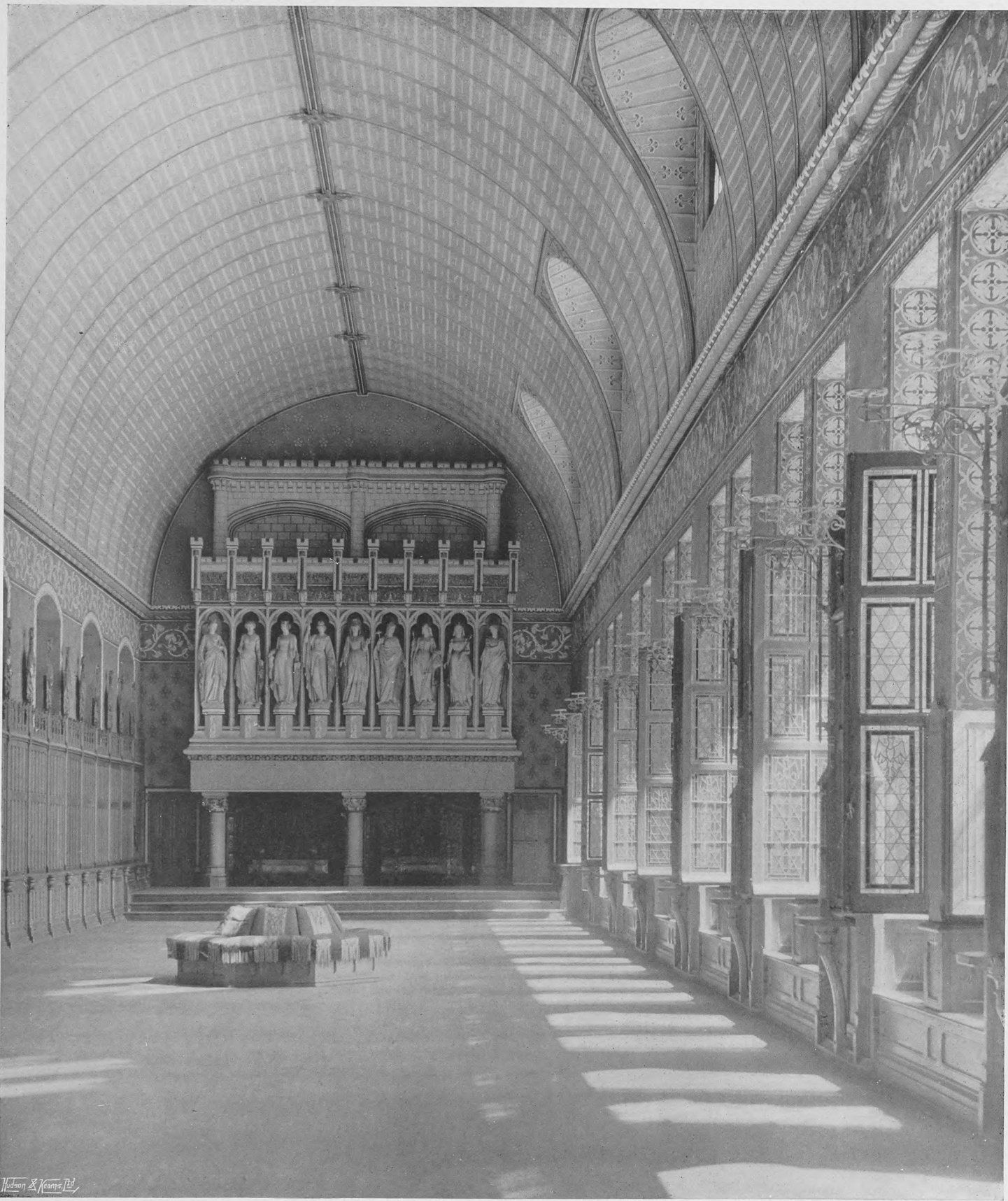
76.—THE MASON AT WORK.

vassals to defend a threatened fortress. They might have been distributed in other places, or might even have joined the national levies of the king against invading hosts of foreigners. In such a case the baron had to rely for his garrison upon those roving bands of mercenaries who fought for anyone who paid them well, and whose loyalty was therefore often far more a matter of money than of personal sentiment. It was only a wise precaution, therefore, so to distribute them among the defences of such a castle as Pierrefonds that, if they meditated treachery, they would find it very difficult to reach the Duke himself. This is why the soldiers' apartments are so carefully cut off from those in which the Prince and his family resided.

Something of what the luxury of a great mediæval household meant can be seen from the walls and carvings reconstituted by Viollet le Duc and photographed by Mr. Evans for these pages. Little of the rude stone of its external armour appeared among the carved and gilt wood, the tapestries, the silken hangings that made the living-rooms of a feudal palace blaze with colour. If its masters knew



the value of security from outward enemies, they valued no less highly the possibilities of comfort and of beauty within doors. The square donjon, itself one of the finest pieces of architecture of its time or country, contains only the private apartments of the Prince, while the hall, which was the centre of the life of the castle, occupies the upper floor on the north-west side of the court, and is only accessible from the donjon by a long



78.—THE NINE VALIANT LADIES IN THE UPPER HALL.

gallery. At its entrance door are Charlemagne's five heroes—Turpin (the Archbishop), Roland, Charlemagne, Oliver and William of Orange. Carved on the panels are the escutcheons of the Constables of France from the tenth century to 1418. Above the chimney-piece, within, are the nine noble ladies who were originally commemorated at Coucy and at La Ferté Milon also, though only such drawings as those of Du Cerceau remain of the beauties that once made Coucy



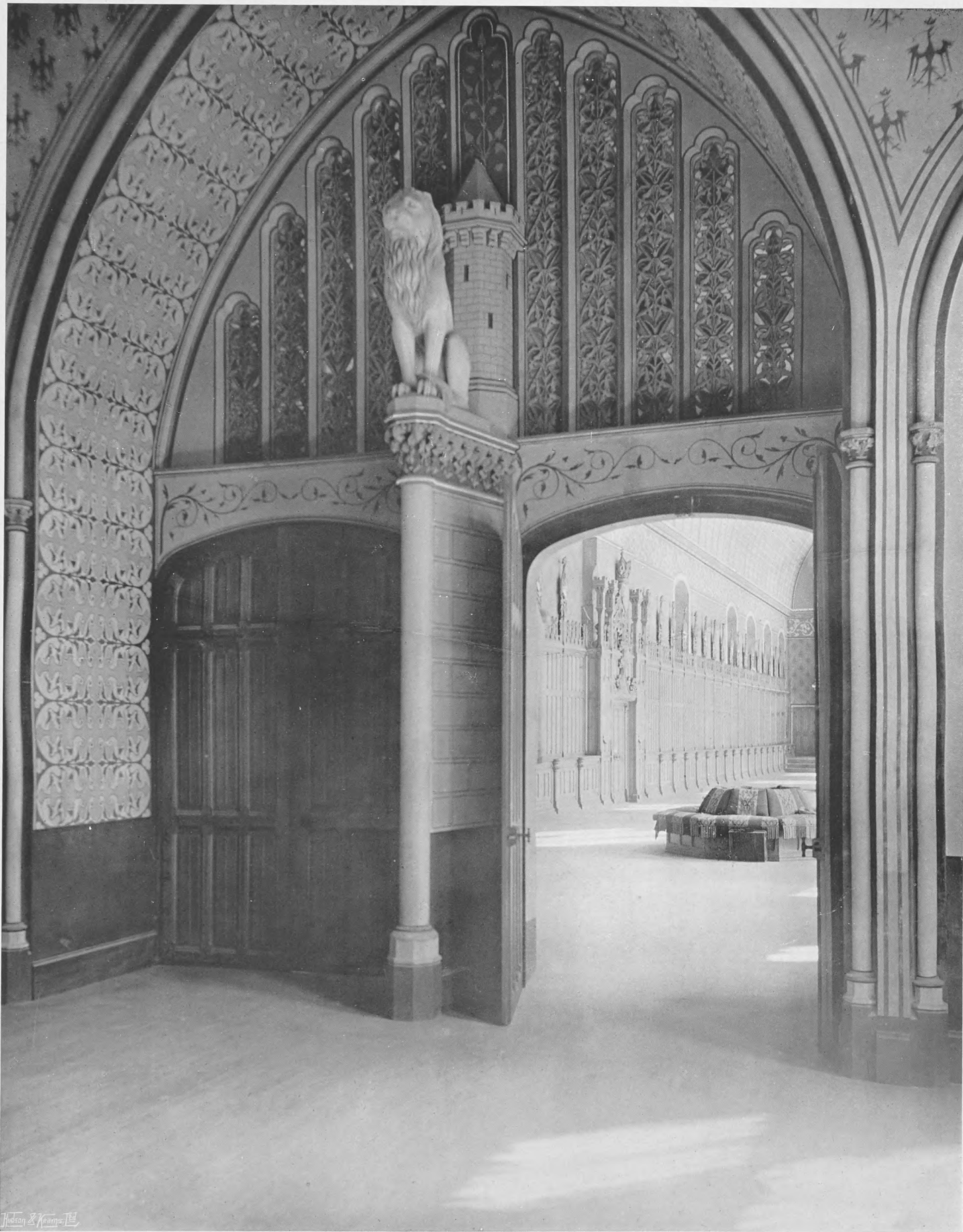
famous. Here at Pierrefonds you may see Semiramis, Deifemme, Lampédo, Hippolyta, Deiphile, Thamyris, Tanqua, Menelippa and Penthesilia, carved from the designs of Viollet le Duc (now in the Trocadero) by the sculptor Gaudran, who chose his models from such famous ladies at the Court of the Second Empire as Princess Anna Murat, the Empress Eugénie, the Duchess of Bassano, or the wife of Marshal Canrobert. Several fragments of the original statues, too mutilated to be used again, are preserved in the Salle d'Armes. It was in the hall, beneath these Heroines Nine, that Louis d'Orléans and his successors sat in State, dispensing justice, ordering prisoners away to the many dungeons of the castle, to torture in the Alexander Tower, or to death upon the castle ramparts. In one of the cells beneath the Tower of Hector some forgotten prisoner has roughly scratched the scene of the Crucifixion. Near it, in legible characters, is the name "Gilles de Flavy."

The second son of Raoul de Flavy and of Blanche, sister of the famous Guy de Nesle who was Marshal of France, Guillaume (or Gilles) de Flavy, has hitherto been chiefly known to history because he was in command of the garrison of Compiègne when Jeanne d'Arc was taken prisoner in a sortie on the evening of May 23rd, 1430. She had hurried here from Crépy-en-Valois with about two hundred men under Barthélemy Baretta, riding all night through the forest paths to the west of Pierrefonds and reaching Compiègne at sunrise. To the north, on the opposite side of the Oise, Baudot de Noyelles held the bridge-head with a small Burgundian outpost, guarding a long paved causeway built through marshes and water-meadows. Higher up stream Jean de Luxembourg held Clairoix; lower down Montgomery and the English were in Venette. After resting her men and taking counsel with Flavy, the Maid sallied out across the bridge, while he lined the town ramparts and the river bank with crossbowmen and archers. She scattered the Burgundians at once. But her attack had been seen by Jean de Luxembourg, who hurried up reinforcements from Clairoix at the gallop. Twice the Maid charged them back from the causeway, until by overwhelming numbers she was crushed off it into the marshy meadow-land, and the English began to come up from Venette as well. Before she could reach the drawbridge into safety she was surrounded and dragged from her horse by an archer of the Bastard of Wandonne, to whom she refused to give her faith or to surrender. With her brothers and d'Aulon, who had fought round her to the last, she was carried off in triumph, a willing sacrifice for the people she had led, whose retreat her bravery had ensured, and so ended the fighting of the Flower of Chivalry. Flavy could neither succour the Maid by sortie, nor leave the drawbridge down any longer when the Englishmen had come up to the charge. His first duty was to Compiègne, and most bravely and successfully he defended it, until October, when the Burgundian troops withdrew. The life of Guillaume de Flavy has been known to the historian almost solely by this single incident. But the researches of Pierre Champion have now revealed a character and career that are well worthy, for their own sakes, of a far more general interest, and a fate that can only arouse the pity of succeeding generations; for Guillaume de Flavy was murdered by his wife in peculiarly tragic circumstances in the Château de Nesle, and we can only conjecture that some incident in his stormy military career beforehand may have at one time forced him to be a temporary and most unwilling visitor in the cells of Pierrefonds.

In 1411, after the murder of Louis d'Orléans, the Comte de St. Pol was ordered by the King to take possession of the heritage of the young Duke Charles, and sent a force to besiege Pierrefonds accordingly. But it was held by Nicholas Bosquiaux, one of the most faithful servants of the House of Orleans, who had already defended it successfully against Burgundian attacks, and was not likely to give it up to anyone without a struggle. It may, therefore, be quite true that it was chiefly to preserve the beauty of his father's house unharmed that the orphan Duke sent orders that Pierrefonds was to be, for the time, surrendered, at a price. The price was two thousand crowns of gold, which St. Pol had to pay before he could get in, while the garrison marched out with all the honours of war to the still vaster towers of Coucy, where they waited till their young master should be reconciled with the unhappy King. When that time came St. Pol was most reluctant to surrender in his turn, claiming huge damages in respect not merely of the first ransom but of the personal loss he would sustain in giving up the captaincy. When at last there was nothing for it but to go, he set fire to the roofs and handed



over the ashes. But very little of the stone construction suffered, and Charles d'Orléans was soon able to repair the damage, though not to restore the whole of the original rafters ; and Pierrefonds was his, almost as strong as ever, when he was taken prisoner in the front rank of the chivalry of France at Agincourt. The faithful Bosquiaux still held out against Burgundy and their captain, Hector de Saveuse, whose men had advanced so far that they had even taken Compiègne. Bosquiaux, by a brilliant surprise, captured the town, and for a time there was surcease from Burgundian enemies. But a harder fate befel in 1420. The rigour of the frosts



79.—ENTRANCE TO THE UPPER HALL.



had produced something like famine in the towns and fortresses round Compiègne, when the invading English burst into the Valois and seized Meaux and Crépy. When they besieged Pierrefonds the unhappy Bosquiaux found himself compelled, from sheer lack of food, to capitulate; after one heroic effort at a desperate defence the Duke of Bedford's army entered in and held the place. The year of the death of both the English and the French kings saw the death of Bosquiaux too. He never knew the return to his ancestral home of Louis XII of France, grandson of his beloved master, its first builder.

I could wish that it was in the hands of a Prince of Orleans that we could leave the history of Pierrefonds, with its towers of Charlemagne and Cæsar (on the right of the entrance), of Arthur and Alexander (on its left), of Godfrey de Bouillon, Joshua, Hector and Judas Maccabæus (behind it), standing, as sturdy as the heroes whose sounding names they bear, around the Donjon of Valentina Visconti. Their strength was sufficient to protect it from anything except artillery; and with the development of "villainous saltpetre" we come to rascals of a very different savour from that proud knight in armour a-horseback in the court. In 1591 Pierrefonds was held for the League by a ruffianly freebooter named Rieux. Two years later Maréchal de Biron was despatched by Henri IV to take it. His letter to the King on September 21st, 1593, does not give an encouraging idea of his success. Rieux, in fact, reinforced by his cousin, Henri de Sauveulx, a militant Canon from the abbey of Saint Jean in Soissons, and puffed up with pride by previous victories, was no easy enemy to subdue. Only his own exaggerated bravado produced his downfall. Accompanied by the Canon, he threw some five hundred cavalry into the town of Noyon at the very time when the King himself was besieging it. He paid the penalty of his rashness with his life, for Noyon was taken, and he was eventually hanged in the market-place of Compiègne in March, 1594. But his religious relative had managed to escape, and when a new governor was put in command of Pierrefonds this Henri de Sauveulx, knowing the details of the fortress, managed to turn out the Royal garrison sent there for the King by d'Estrées, and held it for Spain and the Spanish Governor of the Netherlands, who promptly forwarded one thousand mercenaries to secure so desirable a position. Three times the armies of France attacked him, and at one of these sieges the Duc d'Epéron, commanding for Henri IV, was badly wounded. At last, on All Souls' Eve, 1595, de Sauveulx, who had refused all offers of capitulation, escaped to Belgium, and his Spanish mercenaries sold the place to Henri IV for eighteen thousand ducats. The good Canon died in Madrid, full of riches and honours.

The towns of Compiègne, Crépy and Meaux seem to have been thoroughly alarmed at the possible dangers of Pierrefonds again becoming a robbers' nest from which the surrounding country might be safely pillaged. They begged for its destruction. Henri IV replied by having its plan and elevation carefully drawn and coloured for the Galerie des Cerfs in Fontainebleau. Something very like what the good citizens of Compiègne had feared happened again in 1616. The Marquis de Coeuvre, captain of the castle, joined the rebel party and had to be besieged promptly by the Royal troops under the Comte d'Angoulême. This time artillery was used with something like science. By continuous bombardment a regular breach was made in one of the great towers, and the place surrendered at discretion. Richelieu determined to have no more expensive nonsense of this kind, and on May 16th, 1617, the Comte d'Angoulême received a letter from the young Louis XIII (then a boy of only fifteen) that Pierrefonds was to be destroyed. It was at least rendered useless as a fortress. More could not be effected. Enough was left to provide a sure and certain basis for its restoration. And now we can behold not the "original" stones, stained with the treachery and bloodshed of such rascals as Rieux, but the unfaded beauty and the untarnished strength which the first builder of Pierrefonds knew and loved. Within his own courtyard, where strength and beauty are so cunningly commingled, Louis d'Orléans sits upon his charger, armed at all points, and at home.



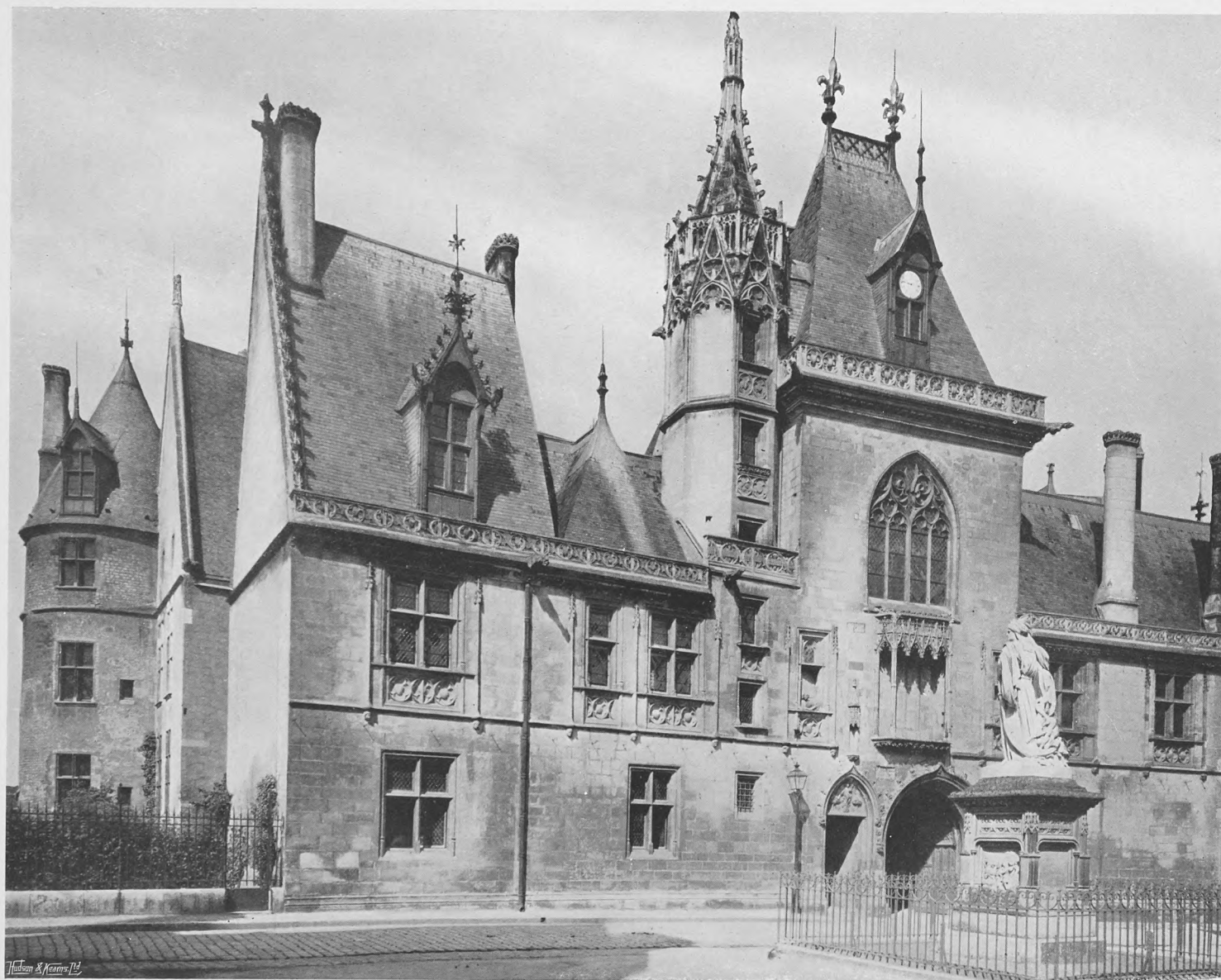
CHAPTER V.

THE HOUSE OF JACQUES CŒUR, AT BOURGES.\*

De pauvreté me guementant  
Souventes foyes me dit le cœur,  
"Homme, ne te doulouse tant  
Et ne demaine ce douleur,  
Si tu n'as tant qu'eut Jacques Cœur,  
Mieux vault vivre sous gros bureaux  
Pauvre, qu'avoir esté seigneur  
Et pourrir sous riches tombeaux."

—VILLON.

IT is not often, even in France, that the romance of history and the beauty of characteristic architecture are so happily blended as we can still find them in the House of Jacques Cœur at Bourges; for in these sculptured stones and nobly planned apartments is to be seen the material surviving evidence of a career that has few parallels in commerce, politics or finance. And as if the genius which presided over the creation of this splendid dwelling had persisted within its halls long after their first owner's death, we discover that they



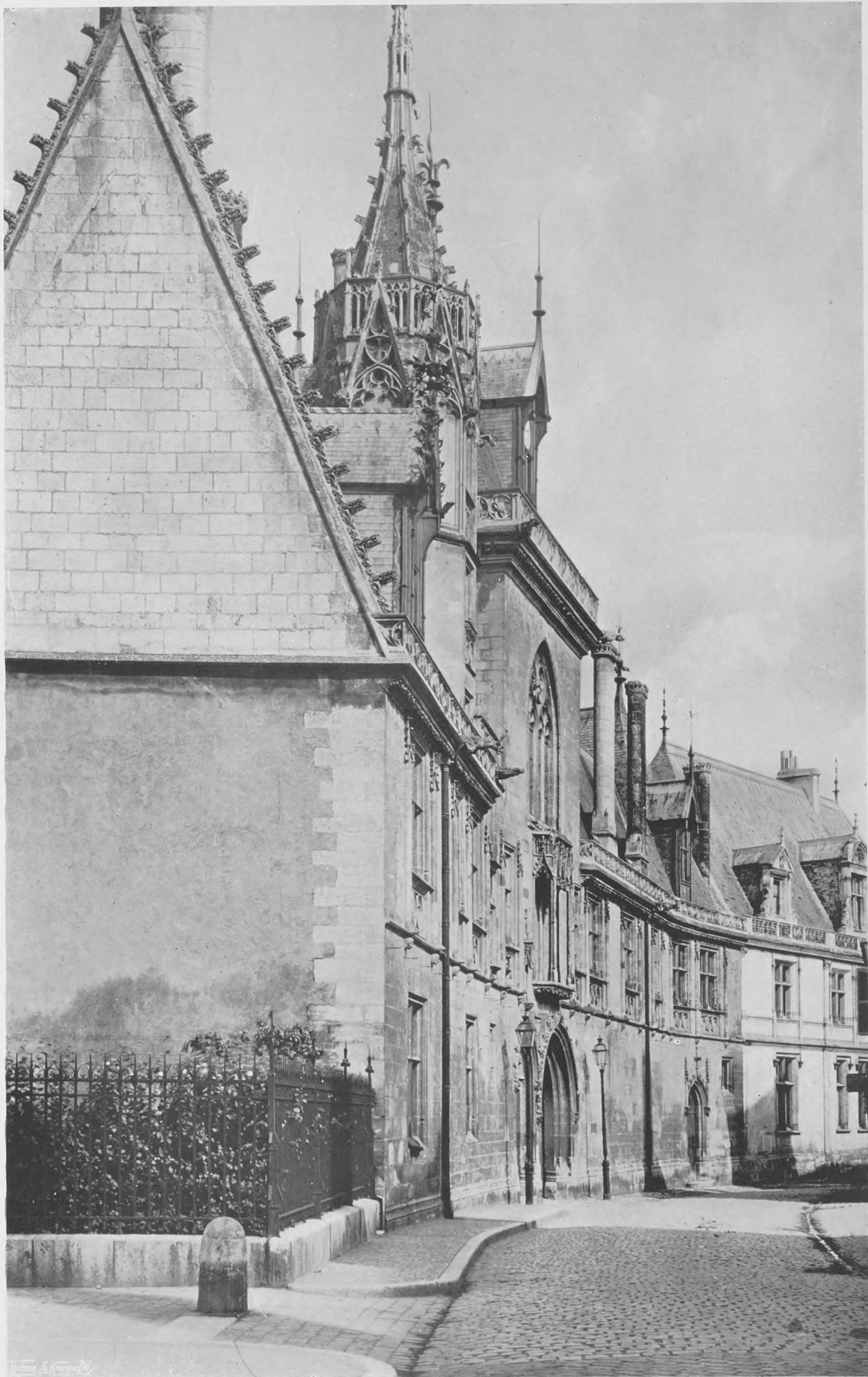
80.—MAISON JACQUES CŒUR: FRONT VIEW.

\* Monument Historique de France.



attracted, as a purchaser and (for some little time) as an inhabitant, no less distinguished a Minister than Colbert, who solidified and perpetuated those facilities for the trade of Louis XIV with the Levant which Jacques Cœur had first initiated and developed, and who did for

France's navy what Jacques Cœur had done for the commerce of French citizens. The imagination of Colbert, who was the son of a Rheims merchant, must indeed have been stirred by the legendary palace of the mysterious merchant-prince of which he became the possessor during the last three years of his life (1679-82); and it is not a little curious that, while he owned it, there should have perished in an unknown dungeon that Nicolas Fouquet whose astounding prosperity was only equalled by the suddenness of the catastrophe which overwhelmed him. Jacques Cœur certainly enjoyed his palace in Bourges for longer than Fouquet ever lived at Vaux-le-Vicomte. But his disgrace and banishment were even more abrupt and far more undeserved, and it was owing only to his superior strength of character and his innate



81.—FACADE ON THE MAIN STREET.

adventurous spirit that he did not die in even a worse prison cell than Fouquet's. Colbert was dead a year after he sold Jacques Cœur's house to the City of Bourges, which still possesses it, and in his library was found an illuminated manuscript of the *Chronicles of Monstrelet*, showing



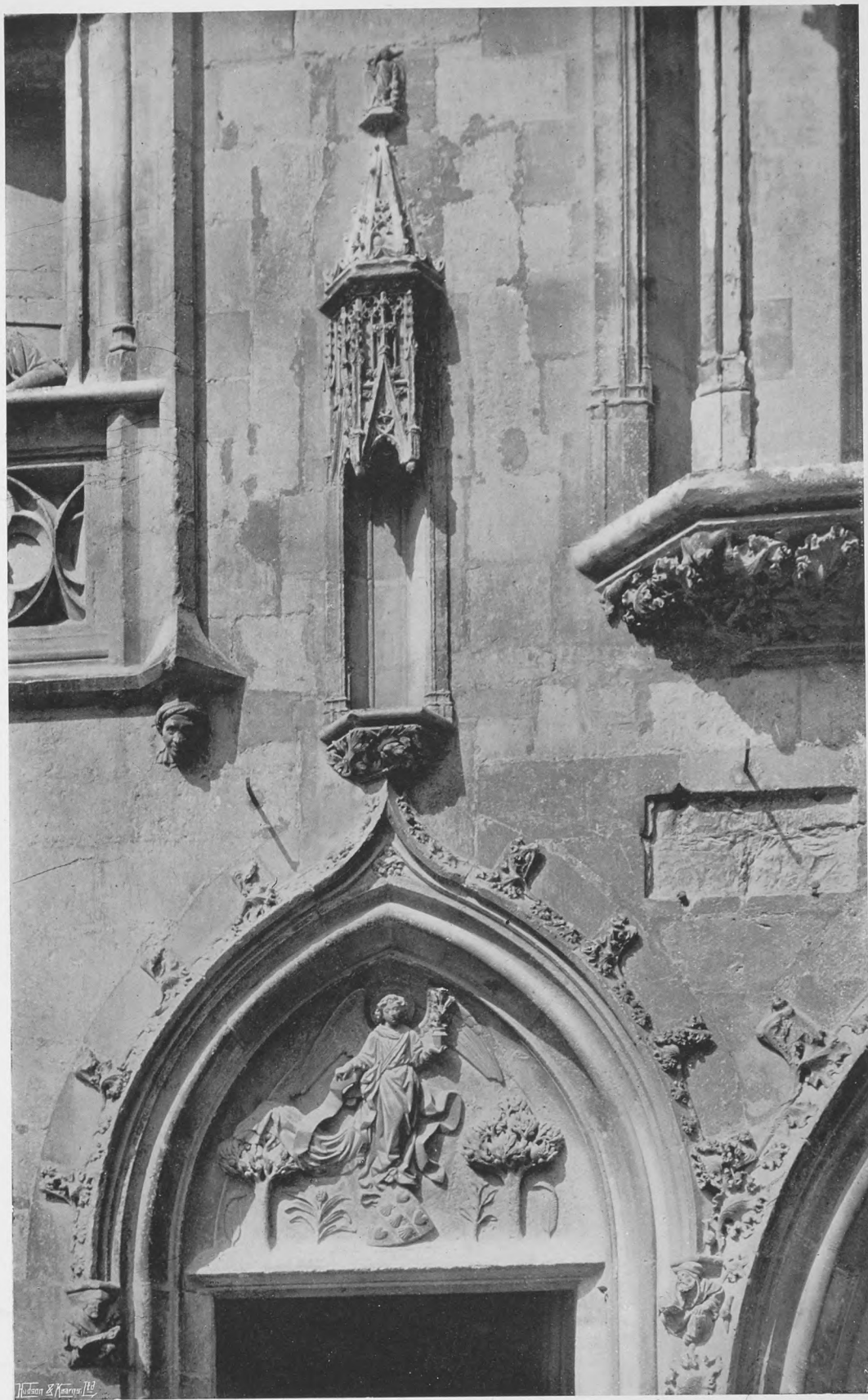
the trial of Jacques Cœur before the King's Justices in Poitiers. There is no doubt that Colbert was strangely attracted by the tragic history which, he must have remembered, occurred in the reign of that same Charles VII who had abandoned Jeanne d'Arc to the tortures of her martyrdom in Rouen. If the liberation of France from the English can be attributed to two



82.—THE ENTRANCE GATEWAY.

persons more than to any others, it was to Jacques Cœur and Jeanne d'Arc (both risen from the people, as Colbert rose) that it was due. Their fate is indeed a warning to all who put their trust in Princes; and we can remember now that the mob of Paris hurled stones at Colbert's coffin. But the Minister had taken the precaution to die before he was disgraced. He had not forgotten the Maid of Orleans or the Merchant-prince of Bourges.





83.—CARVING ABOVE THE ENTRANCE GATEWAY.

In order to explain how a citizen of Bourges was able not only to build the house which bears his name to-day, but also to leave behind him a reputation that will last as long as that of Bourges itself, I must go into a little more detail than is usual in these chapters concerning the life of Jacques Cœur, for it was one of the most vivid and most varied that the annals even of the fifteenth century can show.

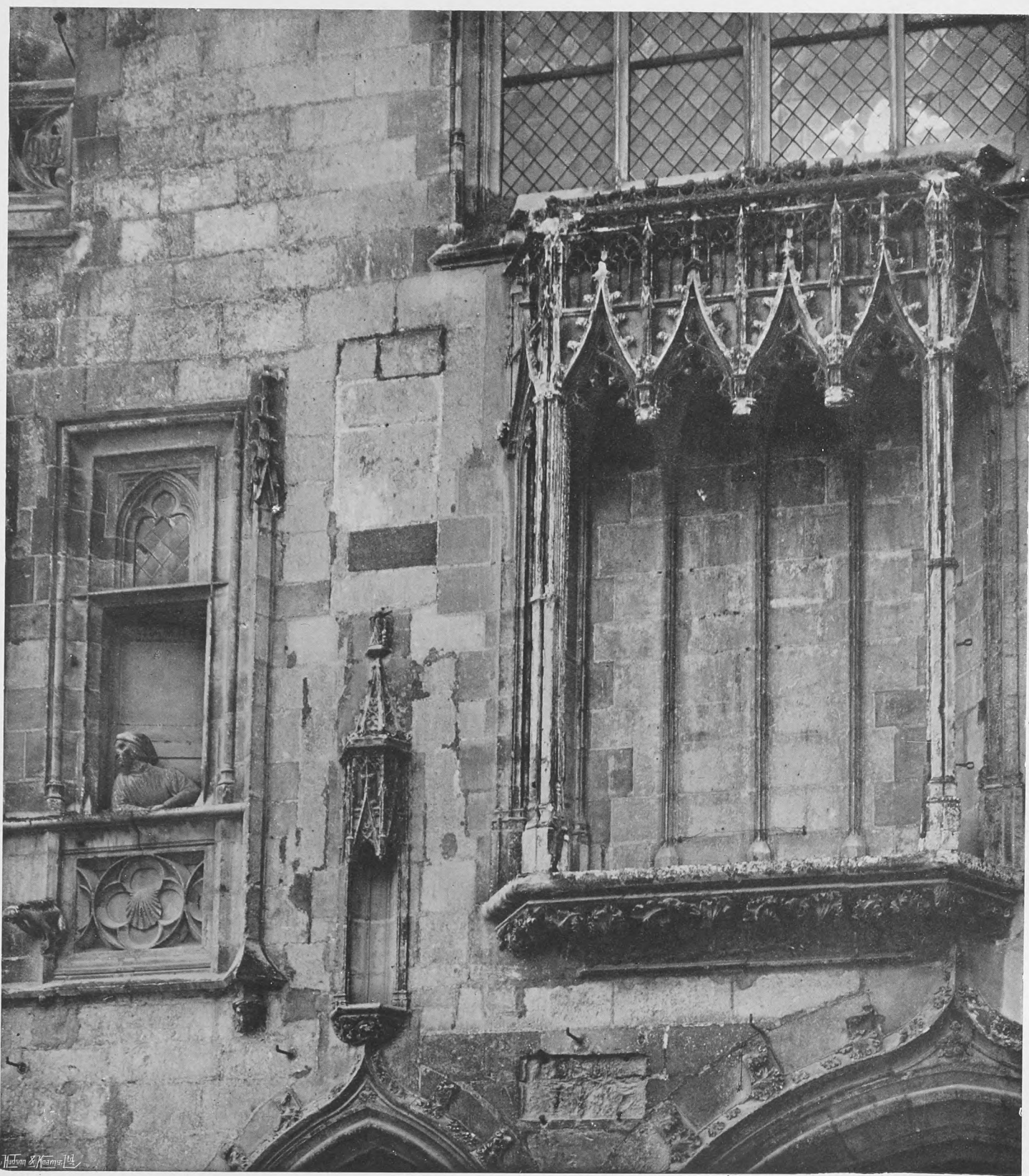
The son of a merchant in the town, Jacques was married in 1418 to the daughter of one of the civic dignitaries, and by 1430 had already got safely through his first dangerous lawsuit in connection with the local mint. Diverted by this temporary annoyance from local activities to wider fields of gain, he had by 1432 begun to develop his business all over France and Flanders and far into the distant harbours of the East. In a short time he had secured most of the carrying trade for his own ships, he had become a banker with resources sufficient to support the King's armies, he was a mine-owner

and Master of the Royal Mint, and controlled agencies for every kind of merchandise in all parts of Europe, with central depôts in Marseilles, Montpellier, Lyons, Tours, Bruges and elsewhere. Suddenly he was falsely accused of murder—the murder of Agnes Sorel—hurled into prison and kept fast during a long and complicated lawsuit which resulted in the total confiscation of all property on which his judges could lay hands. But he escaped from prison and offered his services to the Pope in Rome and died in Chios, as Admiral of the Christian Fleet against the Turks in 1456. It may be well, before describing this astonishing career a little more fully, to add that in his day money was worth about six times what it is at present, the “livre” being equivalent to forty francs, or thirty-two shillings, the “sou” to about one shilling and sixpence. It will also be convenient to



remember that, although dates mentioned are given in the way they are described by contemporary historians, the year (until 1567) was considered to begin, not on January 1st, but on Easter Day, a day which varied in the period between 1422 and 1461 from March 24th to April 25th. It will, therefore, be observed that in such a year as 1450, for example, at least twenty days in April occurred twice over, for Easter was on April 5th in 1450 and on April 25th in 1451.

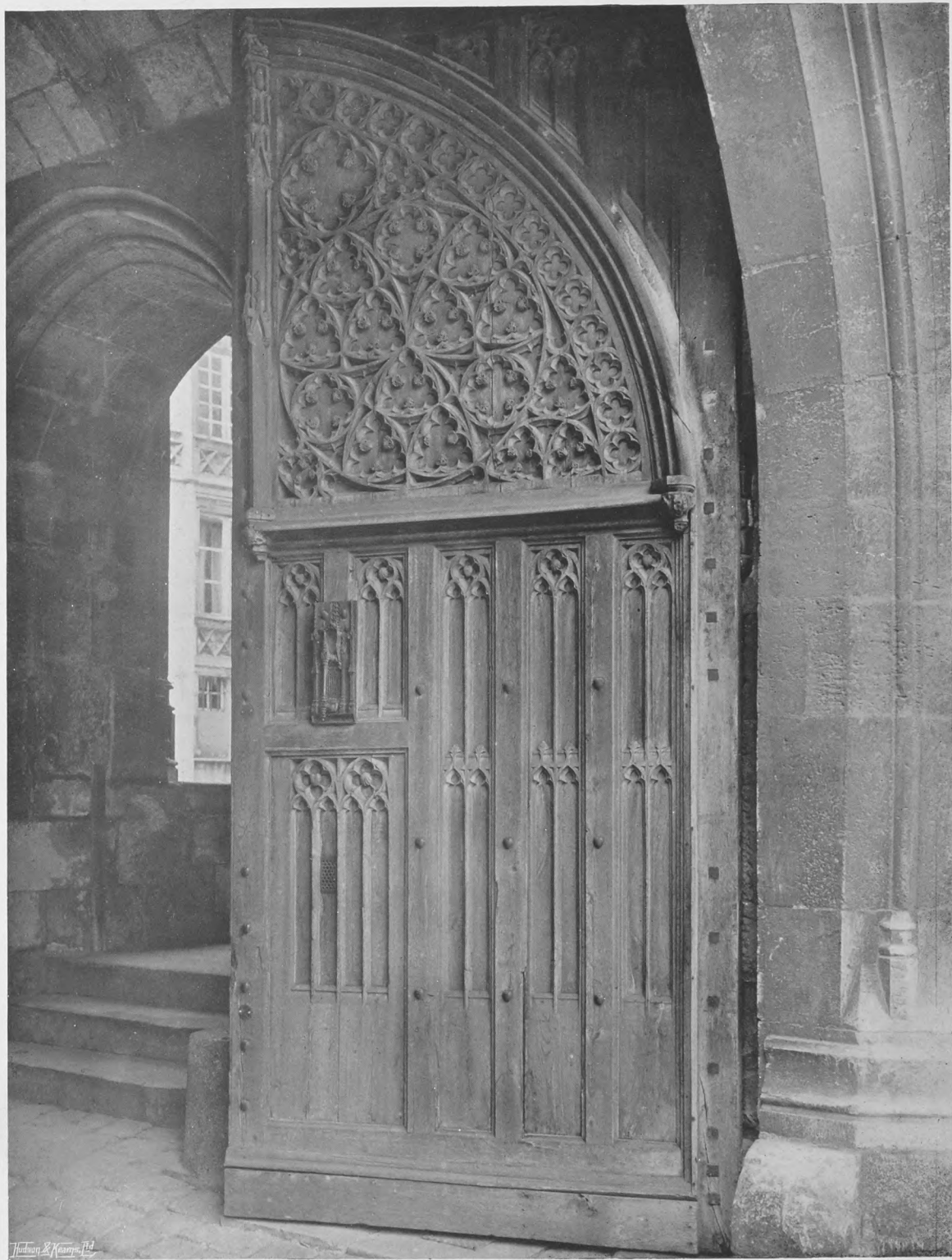
Bourges in the fifteenth century contained seven thousand five hundred houses and nine thousand five hundred families, representing a population of about sixty thousand, who enjoyed better protection against the misfortunes of war than the citizens of almost any other town of the size in France, and were, therefore, very active in commerce, more particularly in manufacturing woollen cloths. Two great fairs, held in June and October, were especially popular, and were attended by travelling merchants from great distances. Pierre Cœur, father of our hero, had risen to a position of some importance in the wool trade of Bourges, and



84.—CANOPY OVER ENTRANCE.



lived at the corner of the Rue des Armuriers and the Rue du Tambourin d'Argent, near the Sainte Chapelle, and in his house Jacques Cœur was born. The date is uncertain, and not much more is known of his family; but in view of his subsequent career it is worth noting that a Jean Cœur was employed in the Royal Mint in Paris and is so mentioned in the National Archives for 1374. Pierre Cœur was certainly a man of substance and authority, and it may be quite possible that as one of the representative merchants of the province of Berry he had come into communication with the commercial envoys sent by Tamburlaine from Samarcand to



85.—OAK DOOR OF ENTRANCE.

should first choose that calling with which his wife's grandfather (who lived close by) was connected, the minting of the King's money, and this calling freed him (by a law of 1211) from certain forms of taxation and from compulsory military service, either to the King or to his feudal overlord; it was also under the control of a special department called the "Cour des Monnaies," which lasted until 1789. Before this Court Jacques was summoned in 1430, and the occurrence may have more importance in the estimation of his subsequent career than has sometimes been imagined.

France. If so, the rapid success of his son in Eastern trade would, at least partly, be explained. But he was, at any rate, able to give that son an excellent start in life. For Jacques married Macée de Léodepart, and she was the daughter of the Provost of Bourges and granddaughter of the Master of the Mint. It would be difficult to conceive a better match; and since Jacques can scarcely have been more than twenty-five, and was not likely to have shown as yet any striking signs of the enormous wealth to come, it is evident that his father must have given satisfactory proof of an assured position; for people were careful about such things in the fifteenth century. It was only natural that the young husband





86.—ENTRANCE GATEWAY FROM THE COURTYARD.



The law of 1211, already mentioned, contained several strict rules as to the workmen and supervisors in the various royal mints, one of which was that no one was admitted who was not of the family of those already working. Unless, therefore, we are to imagine that the Jean Cœur, whose name occurs in connection with the Paris Mint in 1374, was a relation of the Bourges family, of which there is no proof, it is clear that Jacques could not join the Bourges Mint until his marriage to the granddaughter of Roussard, its Master. This involved the further six years' apprenticeship necessary for all who worked in metal at that time, which brings us to about 1424. By 1427, therefore, Jacques would be perfectly ready to accept the partnership proposed by Ravant le Danois, with Pierre Godard, a Bourges money-changer, as the third, in the minting of the King's money at Bourges. Ravant le Danois, who gave himself out as a citizen of Rouen ruined by the English, is one of those curious personages who flit mistily across the pages of history only to disappear into the obscurity from which they have emerged. He proposed to Charles VII in 1420 that he should control the Mints at Bourges, Orleans, Saint Pourçain and Poitiers; but soon found out that he was not rich enough to



87.—A ROOF TURRET.

manage even one of these unaided, and he therefore chose the help of Jacques Cœur for the most important centre outside Paris, and no doubt their combined operations very soon extended to the towns included in the original proposal, a proposal which had secured the approbation of the King. It appears further that the death of the favourite Pierre de Giac had had an unfortunate effect upon Ravant's credit at Poitiers; and when Richemont went further still in his reform of the Palace and brought in George de la Trémouille as the King's confidant-in-chief, in 1427, it looked very much as if Jacques Cœur were to suffer too, for the influence of La Trémouille was absolutely bad. He had married Catherine, the widow of Pierre de Giac and the successor in the King's favours of Jeanne la Louvette;

her evil company brought evil in its train until the appearance of Agnes Sorel; and in strict accordance with the policy inspired by La Trémouille and his wife, all who roused the King to real patriotism or courageous endeavour were thwarted or dismissed. Jeanne d'Arc and Jacques Cœur suffered the same fate.

Before these evil influences began to be so strong, it is fairly certain that Jacques Cœur must have been not only well known to the King, but on familiar terms with many of his courtiers; for when La Hire and Poton de Xaintrailles came down to see Charles VII in Bourges, Jacques sent them a pair of fat chickens and a sheep's tail for their dinner. More than this, we find, from the evidence given by the Duc d'Alençon at the trial for the rehabilitation of Jeanne d'Arc, that the Duke was ordered to procure money, after consultations with Yolande d'Aragon, the King's mother-in-law, for the army that proceeded under Jeanne's orders to Orleans in 1429. That money came from Jacques Cœur and his partners, almost the only men in France then capable of providing enough cash out of the store put under



their charge; and the letters of Charles VII in 1429 prove that it was Ravant and Jacques Cœur who provided it.

The difficulty of a war budget pressed hard upon both French and English, and the siege of Orleans had brought Henry to almost as great straits as Charles. But France had been stirred to a great effort. Gien, Bourges, Blois, Châteaudun and Tours sent men and provisions to Jeanne's army. From Angers, Poitiers, La Rochelle, Albi, Moulins, Montpellier and Clermont came sulphur, saltpetre, steel and armour. Queen Yolande pawned the jewels of Anjou to pay for the convoy of food that was to relieve Orleans. Her son-in-law, the King, pawned the few Crown jewels that were left. The year before, La Trémouille had advanced money to redeem the gold ornaments of the Royal helmet. The money voted by the Assembly of the Estates when Orleans had been first threatened was already gone. And still the convoy



88.—A GROUP OF ROOFS FROM A WINDOW IN THE GALLERY OF THE COURT OF APPEAL.

was delayed with Jeanne at Blois, who was guarding sixty waggons of provisions and grain and four hundred head of cattle; and no money seemed available from anywhere to pay the four thousand soldiers who were waiting to march to the relief of Orleans. Suddenly the King procured it from Jacques Cœur and his partners. The value of their assistance may be judged both from the immediate crisis to which they put an end and from the brilliant results of the operations forthwith started. But in order to supply the King's necessities at so vital a moment they had been obliged to have recourse to the artifice of striking seventy-five, eighty-four and even eighty-nine crowns to a marc. In 1429 the Ecu Royal was worth thirty-seven shillings, and the right number of coins of eighteen-carat gold to be made out of a marc of metal was seventy. It will easily be seen that a reduction in weight to fourteen carats of gold in each coin would enable more coins to be made, and therefore the King would

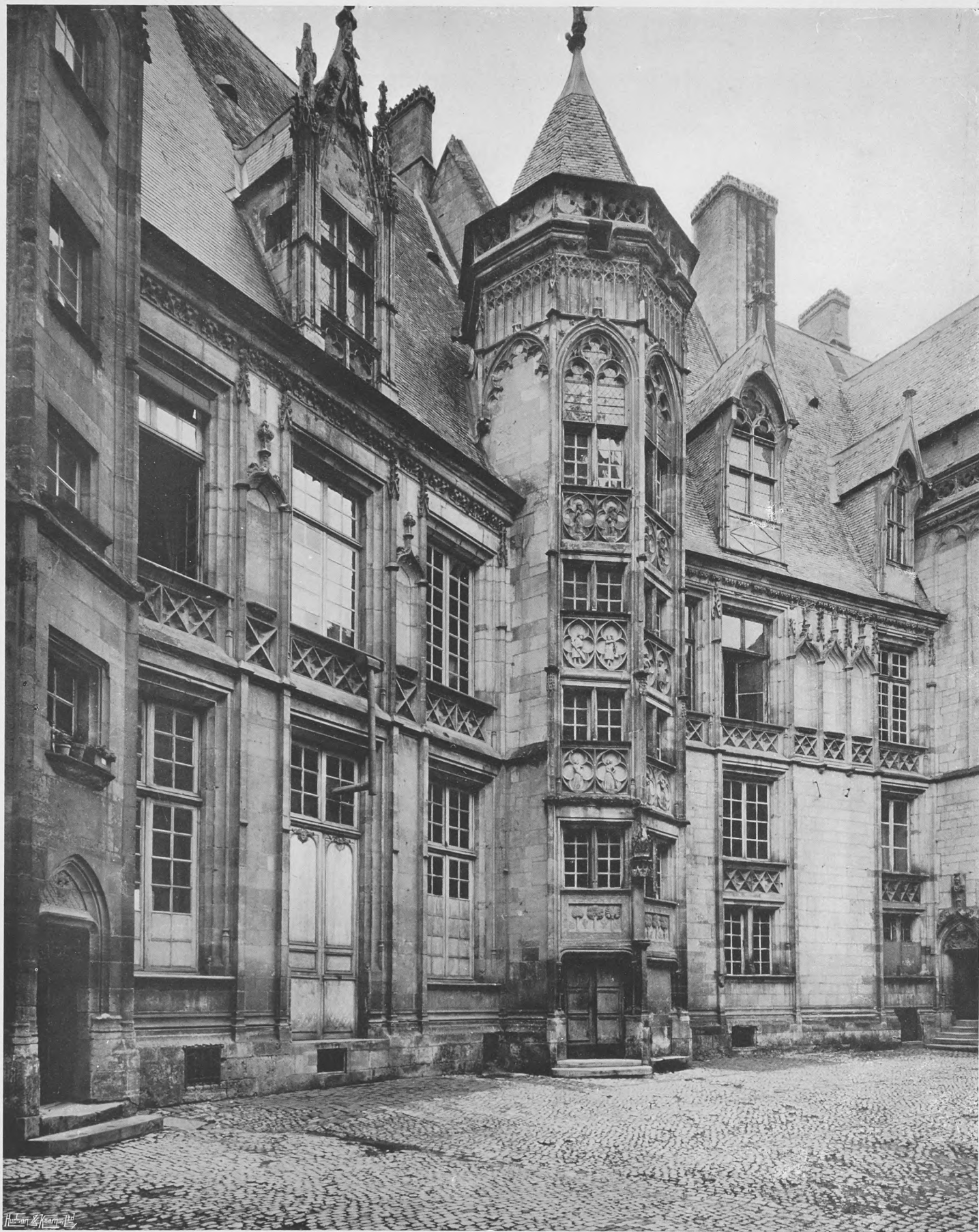


have more money for the payment of his troops than he could reasonably expect from the gold in the hands of Jacques Cœur. This does not seem criminal, at first sight, on the part of the Bourges partners, and certainly neither the King nor the soldiers seem to have complained. But a moment's consideration will show that very strict pains and penalties against any debasement of currency had to be enforced, in spite of the fact that the King himself had occasionally to resort to it, for it meant that current coins would have not an intrinsic value, as a medium of exchange, but only the value fixed by the King; and the King was at this time only "Roi de Bourges." France was still in a most distressing state of financial weakness and commercial uncertainty, and no one trusted to anything except actual intrinsic value; so that whenever the King either debased the coinage or restored its value, fortunes were both made and lost. In the present instance the operations of Jacques Cœur may well have been carried out with the deliberate intention of attracting into the currency of Charles VII's subjects all those coins of better value struck in the name of Henry VI, which would result in serious embarrassment to the English. But it was hardly likely that either the common people or the average citizen would appreciate such possibilities, and therefore a victim had to be publicly found, if only to silence the open voice of discontent. No doubt La Trémouille was only too glad of a chance to victimise Jacques Cœur. But the King never let the case go too far. He realised that Jeanne d'Arc's army had been paid by money which would eventually come out of the pockets of the English; and when Ravant admitted that previous demands from the King's servants had been so heavy that debasement at this sudden crisis was inevitable, and further expressed a desire to make good any just sum that might be demanded, that sum was fixed at one thousand crowns of gold, and it was paid jointly by the three partners. Until La Trémouille definitely stopped his working at the Mint in Bourges, Jacques Cœur continued to support the army of Jeanne d'Arc by every means in his power. She was in Bourges with d'Albert in November, 1429, and it may be easily surmised that Jacques Cœur was a heavy contributor to the one thousand three hundred gold crowns raised by the town. But La Trémouille took what was meant for the siege of La Charité. Jeanne's fatal lack of resources later on, which led up to her capture in May, 1430, was largely owing to the fact that Jacques Cœur's money was no more forthcoming. Still, he remained in France. It was not until after her martyrdom in 1431 that he seems to have made any definite preparations for those voyages in the Far East that were to result in so stupendous a success. Their immediate motive was perhaps the necessity for supplying furniture and jewellery of price for the Royal Family, for as soon as he was forced to give up the Mint, he took Pierre Godard and Barillet de Xaincoins, both of Bourges, into partnership as a firm for providing the King and Queen and the Royal Family with furniture and every necessary for the royal palaces and pleasures. This partnership was dissolved in 1439, but it was undoubtedly a clever utilisation of previous relations with present possibilities, and it led almost inevitably to that expansion of foreign trading in which the true genius of Jacques Cœur really lay. It will be worth looking at the possibilities which lay before him.

The heroism of Jeanne d'Arc had only just begun to liberate France from the reign of terror involved by the English occupation; and the miseries of the kingdom in the first quarter of the fifteenth century can hardly be exaggerated. The old customs had disappeared and new laws and safeguards had not yet come into existence. The countryside was devastated by bands of the most brutal robbers under arms. The villages were only visited by their overlord when he returned suddenly to his castle to grind still more closely the faces of the already starving poor. Constant bloodshed had accustomed both gentle and peasant to the horrors of war and to the unrestrained cruelties of internecine strife. Family life itself had become a hideous travesty. Earl Harcourt kept his wretched father in a dungeon all his life. The Countess of Foix poisoned her sister. The Duc de Giac poisoned his wife. The Duke of Brittany starved his brother to death within sight and hearing of those who passed by. Count Adolf of Gueldre dragged his father, half naked, five miles through the snow and hurled him into a ditch to die. It seemed difficult to create even astonishment at such crimes. But there was a criminal yet left whose ghastly atrocities roused even that hardened age to universal execration: Gilles de Retz (or Rais), Seigneur de Chantocé; for he murdered little children wholesale as sacrifices to the Devil. The remains of more than a hundred tiny corpses were found in various



charnel-houses in his wide domains. He was strangled and his corpse was burnt upon the public place of Nantes. His high lineage, his enormous wealth, his public actions (for he had fought beside Jeanne d'Arc) had all made so terrible a punishment seem well-nigh impossible. But the Duke of Brittany and his brother, the Constable Richemont, were strong enough to



89.—THE COURTYARD.

compass it. With that example of fearless justice came the beginnings of reformation after the barbarities and miseries into which the English war had plunged all the fair land of France. It is a curious fact that with this reformation must chiefly be connected the lazy, good-natured, handsome, feckless Charles VII, the king who did so much only because he was so "well



served," served by the brave Dunois, by the heroic Xaintrailles, by the politic Brézé, by the Maid herself and by two men of humble origin, Jean Bureau, his Master of Artillery, and Jacques Cœur. But Jacques had yet to prove that early friendships were to ripen into something greater. The enormous resources from which Charles himself and his impoverished nobles might draw the wealth that was to regenerate his country had yet to be amassed. Jacques Cœur realised that two preliminaries were necessary. France herself could be rid of



90. —A STAIRCASE IN THE COURTYARD.

the *écorcheurs*, who made her highways impossible for peaceful trade, by Frenchmen like Richemont or Dunois. But the wealth that was to be poured into her must come from outside. Jacques Cœur discovered what the Jews had understood centuries before him—that money has no political boundaries, and the possibilities of commerce are limited only by the possibilities of travel. Patriotism, in the modern sense, was practically unknown until Jeanne d'Arc roused the French to drive the English back across the Channel, and to realise that in doing so they had become a nation. Even those boundaries which one can begin to recognise as those of modern France only began to come into being under the relentless centralising policy of Louis XI in the next reign. But it took longer still for men to see that they had any interest in nations beyond their own borders, save the interests of conquest. The enormous increase in precious metals, and consequently in available currency, produced by the discovery of the New World was scarcely more valuable than the impetus it gave to a wider outlook on affairs



in general, and to the removal of that fear of travelling which lasted so much longer than one now can understand at all. The difficulties of communication, not merely in person but by letter, were for many years almost insuperable for all who depended on reports from far-off agents for their operations nearer home; and before the invention of printing (which was almost contemporaneous with the age of Jacques Cœur) the spread of general knowledge with regard both to the results of exploration and to the necessary details about foreign countries was slow and meagre. All these things have to be remembered when we consider what was involved by the determination of Jacques Cœur to trade with the Levant, and by means of a well-equipped service of his vessels to tap the almost virgin wealth that had accumulated there.



91.—A DOOR IN THE COURTYARD.

Several indications suggest the probability of further contact between the destinies of the Merchant-prince of Bourges and those of the Maid of Orleans. It can hardly be mere coincidence that this contact extends to an emphatic recommendation of expeditions to the East.

"If you must fight, go fight against the Saracens," wrote Jeanne to the Duke of Burgundy on the day the King was crowned at Rheims. Now the "Saracens" of 1430 were, as Jacques Cœur well knew, the Osmanlis whose ambition for an imperial throne in European politics had been checked by Tamburlaine, the prophet of commercial alliances. Jacques Cœur was almost

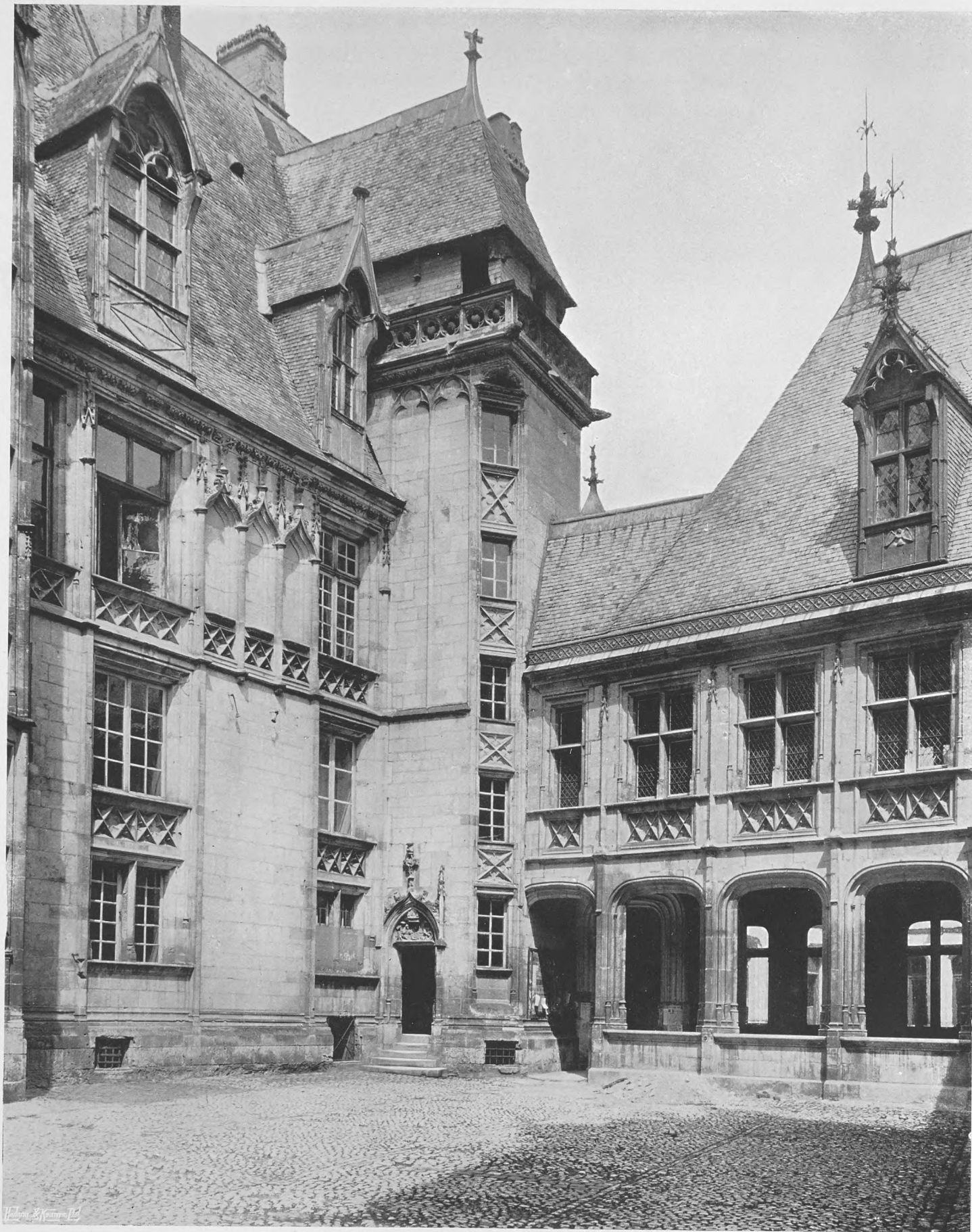


as hostile to them as was Tamburlaine himself. He died fighting against them at Chios, and his admiral's commission he held from that same Pope who ordered the trial for the rehabilitation of Jeanne d'Arc. It may be no more than a coincidence that the date of his own condemnation in his final trial was the exact date when Constantinople fell, May 29th, 1453; but it may also indicate that the King's councillors were not unwilling that a part of the odium connected with a catastrophe so terrible for Christendom should fall (however unjustly) upon a merchant who had been connected in the popular mind with Turks, Jews, infidels and heretics throughout his extraordinary career. There is also a further point to be remembered. The whole policy of Jacques Cœur was contrary to the carefully calculated schemes of the Jews and Lombards, who had effected an alliance with the Italian financiers in order to become the Banking Syndicate for the impoverished thrones of Europe. As soon as Jacques Cœur was dead, his policy disappeared with him, and none holloaed the hounds more heartily upon their quarry than Otto Castellain, Treasurer of Toulouse, a cousin of the Medici. Within a short time we find Francis I not only marrying his son Henry to the daughter of an Italian banker, but actually signing an alliance with the Turk himself. It was not only the beginning of the fatal entanglements of French finance with Imperial aspirations, but it was the death-blow to the prosperous commercial negotiations carried on by Jacques Cœur. Not until the genius of Colbert was beside Louis XIV did the supremacy return to France which Jacques Cœur had given to her commerce, and which Jeanne d'Arc had dreamed for her more spiritual powers.

Just as the Maid of Orleans was fatally condemned to outward failure because she represented all those forces of the future which were so fiercely antagonistic to the contemporary ideals of the Church and the Nobility, so was Jacques Cœur fated to disgrace at his own Court because he represented the three principles so hostile to its character: the Bourgeoisie, finance and commerce. So, when Jacques was in deadly peril, it was his own lieutenants who alone assisted him. When the Maid died, it was the common people who most openly bemoaned her lot. In each case, too, there was a single exception to the general apathy of the official or aristocratic classes. As the crowd left the smoking pyre upon the Market Place of Rouen, the English king's secretary turned to his comrade and cried out, "We are lost; for we have burnt a saint." When every man's hand was against Jacques Cœur, and when the King of France himself demanded that he should be given up, René d'Anjou alone stood up and nobly refused to surrender that brave fugitive; and this was the René who had carried the Maid into safety when she was wounded by an arrow in the moat at Paris; the René whose mother, Yolande d'Aragon, had certified to Jeanne's chastity and fitted out, with money raised on her own jewels, the Maid's convoy for the relief of Orleans. Again, it may be no more than a coincidence that of this René's many titles, perhaps the one he valued even higher than that of Ruler of Provence was King of Jerusalem. He had been a friend of Jacques Cœur in the early days at Bourges. He must have realised, with as quick a sympathy as did the merchant, that there was some hidden meaning in that reiterated cry of Jeanne d'Arc, that through her "the ancient promises should be knit up, and the sworn rights of old should live again"; in her constant warning that the relief of Orleans and the coronation at Rheims were but "signs of something greater." Christine de Pisan at least spoke plainly of what that "something greater" was: "Des Sarrazins fera essart (harvest) En conquerant la Sainte Terre." Yes, René, King of Jerusalem, must have dreamed of that too, deep in the loyal, chivalrous, poetic heart of him; and if the Maid could say, "The thing I have to do shall last a thousand years," the Merchant-prince of Bourges could go forth to the East with no less proud a motto—"A Vaillants Cœurs Rien d'Impossible."

He took his risks. But he took another motto, too, "En bousche close n'entre mousche." He kept the secret closely of his political relations with the Levant and the East. He never revealed that he was only bringing ships and men and money where the way had been made straight before him owing to the preliminary correspondence between Tamburlaine and the father of the king he served. His ships were assured, and his quays and counting-houses were protected owing to the definite confirmation of that correspondence both by Tamburlaine's successor and by Charles VII, whose "Maitre Argentier" he was—a humble enough title for so great a man. The blazon of the three cockle-shells for Jacques, and of the three





92.—THE CLOISTER.



hearts for Cœur, became known South, East and West, wherever men trafficked in French cloth or Indian spices.

Jacques Cœur was amazingly successful ; but there is, after all, nothing more miraculous in his good fortune than what should naturally result from courage and hard work on somewhat novel lines. His first venture was very far from promising. After Jeanne d'Arc had been taken prisoner, and when the winter of 1430 showed that her doom was sealed, he sailed on a preliminary voyage to Alexandria ; and his galliot was captured by pirates off the coast of Sardinia. The crew were glad enough to buy their life and liberty at the price of the cargo. Learning experience from his first defeat, he established a branch house of business in Montpellier, which was full of Jews and Lombards and near to a good port of embarkation for the Mediterranean. More important than all, the town had been specially privileged by Pope Clement VI, on its cession to the French king in 1349, "to carry on commerce with the Infidel without incurring the censure of the Church." Lastly, it possessed the great advantage of a special Court of Justice founded by St. Louis, where the numerous lawsuits likely to arise in a commercial town could quickly be settled, with an authority that was recognised throughout the King's dominions. The value of the new centre was quickly proved. In the spring of 1433 we find a most interesting description of Jacques Cœur's operations in Damascus, written by Bertrandon de la Brocquière, who had been sent out by the Duke of Burgundy to Syria. It is worth translating as it appears in the manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale :

The Christians are hated in this place. Merchants are shut up in their houses every night by special officers who open the doors when they please next morning. Traders come here from Genoa, Venice, Spain, Florence and France. The French chiefly buy spices and count on returning by a galley from Narbonne which is in harbour here. Among them is Jacques Cœur the King's Treasurer, who told us that this galley was then at Alexandria and that it would probably call at Beyrouth with his three partners on board.

This is almost the only glimpse we get, at first hand, of Jacques Cœur actually at work ; and from what is said of him I would suggest that he held, thus early in his career, the same post of "Consul des François et des Pelerins" which was held by the Frenchman who sheltered some Florentines in his house in Alexandria in 1384. Damascus, which was sacked by Tamburlaine early in the fifteenth century, had risen to be a city of one hundred thousand souls when the Burgundian envoy visited it and saw the house, probably the French Consul's, with the fleur-de-lys of France carved on its walls. It is curious that the return of Jacques Cœur from this second expedition seems to coincide with a definite change for the better in the counsels of the King, and it is not difficult to imagine that the growing prosperity of "Monseigneur l'Argentier" may have had its effect in this ; for one of the first "reforms" was the murder of La Trémouille, whose opposition to Jeanne d'Arc had been no less apparent than his hostility to Jacques Cœur. The influence of the Constable Richemont, which replaced it, was all to the good ; and Agnes Sorel, who was faithful both to the King and to the interests of France from 1431 to 1450, was originally at the Court of Yolande, mother of René of Anjou, another friend of Jacques Cœur. In Dunois, one of Jeanne d'Arc's most staunch supporters, the King had his strongest friend after the Constable. With them were Chabannes, La Hire and Poton de Xaintrailles, with all of whom the merchant of Bourges was on friendly and even familiar terms. With the brothers Bureau, who rose from being simple citizens of Paris to the closest confidence of their Sovereign, Jacques Cœur would have a very natural sympathy ; and with these men and others, either working in his favour or certainly not in opposition to his proceedings, Jacques was assured of the highest patronage and security at home while he was working his hardest at the development of his widespread schemes abroad. One little proof of this may be seen in the significant fact that in 1437 Charles VII re-established the Mint in Bourges, with Jacques Cœur at the head of it ; and there are documents still in existence to prove that from this year onwards Jacques lent various sums of money to the King ; and in 1438 we find the receipt for a large weight of silver, handed to the "Argentier du Roi," who now had evidently begun to fill the double rôle of Jeweller or Silversmith and Banker to the King, which is traceable in the still existing account books of Messrs. Child and Co. at Temple Bar, the famous banking firm which grew out of the business transactions of the jeweller and silversmith, Mr. Child, with the Court of Charles II. From this time onwards, too, we find Jacques setting his face firmly against any repetition of that debasement of the currency which had proved not merely



unprofitable (in the end) to the King, but also disastrous (for the time) to himself. All coins issued under his authority were of fine gold or silver henceforward, and on some there is stamped, by a rare distinction, the word "Bourges."

Still more important were the reforms, so essential to the development of commerce, which were carried out in enforcing the King's Peace throughout the highways of the kingdom. Something of the atrocities committed by the bands of mercenaries and bandits who wandered over the country I have already suggested. They demoralised the nobles as much as they terrified the peasants. One of the worst of their leaders was Alexander, the Bastard of Bourbon, who went so far as to support, in 1439, the first rebellion of the Dauphin Louis against Charles VII. The Constable caught him and drowned him in the Aube. As a means of enforcing the royal authority, a corps of some sixteen thousand "Francs-Archers" was organised under the royal command, who kept order so excellently that, as Matthieu de Coucy relates, "merchants may now travel safely from one part of the kingdom to another, and do their business in security." Jacques Cœur provided the first funds from which their pay was drawn. His work was recognised by the royal patent of nobility granted to him and to his wife and children in 1440.



93.—GALLERY OF THE COURT OF APPEAL.

It is time to look a little closer at the portrait left of him by a contemporary. "He was no scholar," writes Thomas Basin, "but of a broad and infinitely capacious mind, full of energy in the business that concerned him. He was the first Frenchman of the fifteenth century to build and fit out ships which bore to Africa and the East the woollen cloths and merchandise of France. On their return voyage his ships brought back silk and spices from Egypt and the Levant, some of them sailing up the Rhone and others steering for Catalonia and the neighbourhood, by which means they competed with the Venetians and Genoese for traffic hitherto



monopolised by them and the Catalonians ; and thus he acquired by the business of his fleets a prodigious amount of wealth." His features, engraved by Grignon in 1653, precede the essay by Denis Godefroy, and are of the strong hardy type of the merchant-adventurer—keen but by no means vulgar ; bold but businesslike. Jacques is portrayed by Grignon in a robe of figured brocade with a velvet cap. In a painting in the Museum at Bourges he is shown with the ends of his head-dress floating over his shoulders and the neck left bare ; but the head, like that of the engraving, is three-quarter face. Probably this painting dates from about the middle of the eighteenth century, and may have belonged to Colbert when he owned the house, for it originally hung within its walls. The medallions and statuettes also exhibited here are of more modern make. There is also a drawing in the Bibliothèque Nationale carefully copied from the miniature in a fifteenth century illuminated manuscript of Monstrelet, which may not improbably have inspired both Grignon's engraving and the painting at Bourges. This certainly belonged to Colbert, as has been said. All show a man evidently of coarser, stronger fibre than the aristocratic statue by a modern sculptor which now stands before Jacques Cœur's house.

That house is almost as much of an enigma as the man who built it, and it would scarcely have been understood, without knowing what I have sketched above, that its builder had piled up riches by a monopoly in the Eastern trade, and had invested them in such lordships as Saint-Fargeau, Champignolles, Melleroy, Fontenailles, Villebon, La Fresnaye, Roanne and



94.—FRIEZE OF SECOND FIREPLACE IN THE GALLERY OF COURT OF APPEAL.

many more, and in houses in Paris, Tours, Lyons, Beaucaire, Béziers, Narbonne, Marseilles, Montpellier and Perpignan, in which his various agents lived when he was not visiting them himself. Each of them, especially that at Montpellier, was covered with curious details and allegories ; but that at Bourges surpassed them all, and no one now will ever find the key to all its carven riddles. Jacques Cœur only bought the land on which it stands in 1443, as a royal fief called La Chaussée ; and from Guillaume Lallemand, whose own house is still at Bourges, he bought building materials and cut stone to enlarge the old walls and Romanesque tower which already existed. Before he had done more than complete the outer walls, he had spent one hundred thousand crowns of gold.

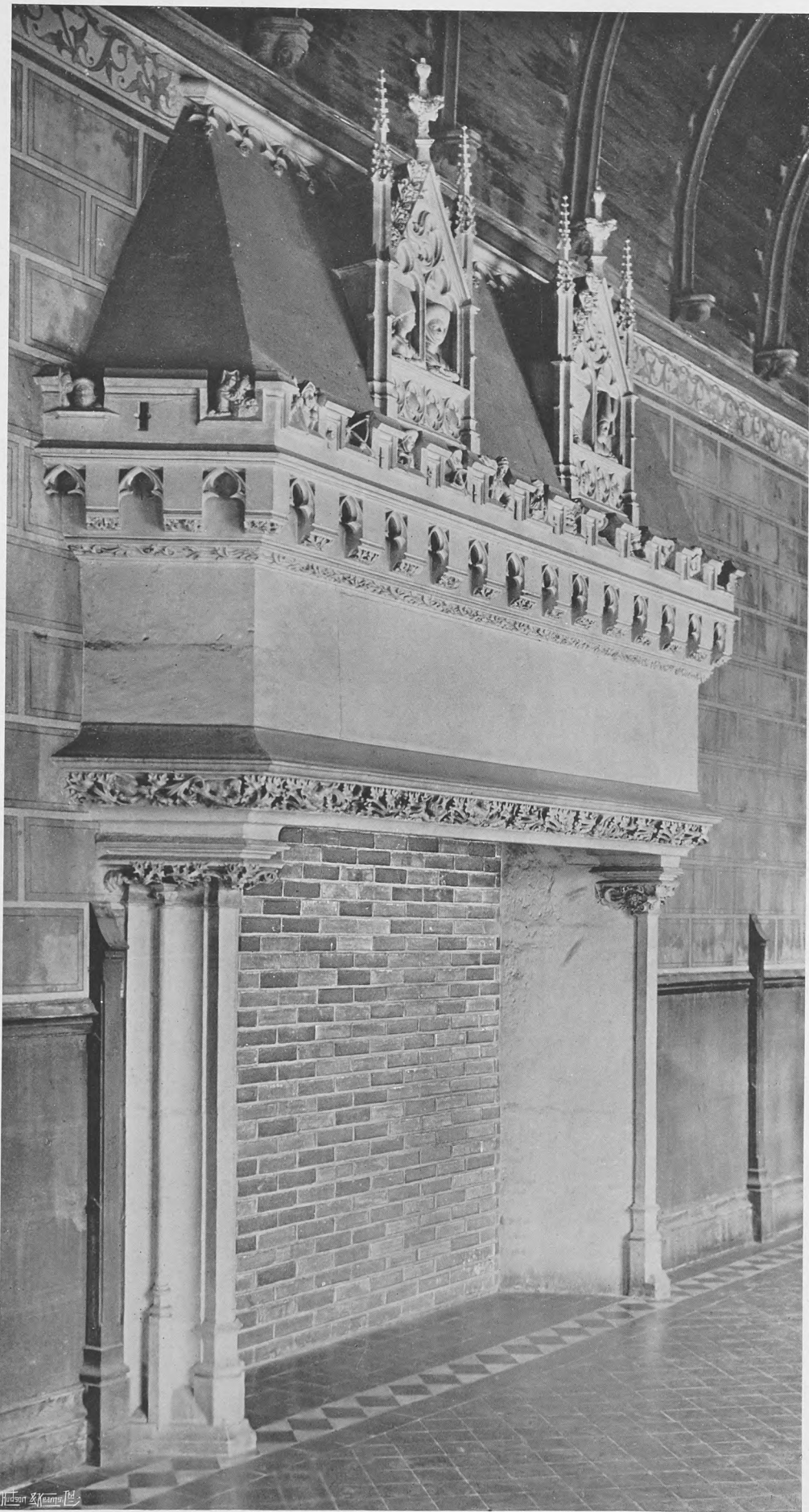
Michelet sees in the very position of the house the bargainer's desire to show much and betray little, the parvenu's foible of exaggerating both his modesty and his defiance, in the way the building juts out into the street and yet preserves its privacy. But I think there is no more in the decorations than a legitimate pride in Oriental traffic, and no more in the plan than a deft application of the old site to newer needs. The irregular parallelogram of the courtyard shows its fine carvings on the street façade, the hearts and cockle-shells of the great merchant are on every balustrade ; the statue of Charles VII beneath a royal canopy used to be above the graceful entrance-gate. A little further on a groom and a chambermaid are sculptured at a casement, looking out for the master's return. Upon a balcony is carved the proud device : A VAILLANS [CŒURS] RIENS IMPOSSIBLE. Within the court are charming bas-reliefs above the doors of servants and workmen, of women spinning and sweeping, of pedlars and others. An



open gallery gave communication through this court to the various parts of the house. The sculptured scene of pots and pans indicates the turret which led towards the kitchen. Above the door into the dining-room are carved orange and pine trees with a few flowering plants.

A little higher up Jacques Cœur, holding what is probably an instrument for minting money (though some think it a mason's mallet), offers a bouquet to Macée de Léodepart, his wife. Carved on the wall is the maxim that guided his life, "Listen and say Nothing. Work and be silent. My joy is in my heart." The last sentence is a rebus on his name, in the pictorial form so beloved of the mason of the time.

The chapel, finished in July, 1450, is small but exquisitely ornamented, and at the foot of the stairway which leads up to it is a carving of a priest holding a missal and a holy-water sprinkler, followed by a choir-boy, who rings the bell for mass, and by a beggar. Jacques Cœur and his wife are sculptured upon each side of the altar. Among the prophets on one of the side walls may be seen King David with his harp; his head, leaning backwards, allows a richly jewelled crown to fall to the ground. The angels at the springing of the vaults hold shields with arms of the Cœur family. Above, other angels, whose faces are beautifully painted, display small labels upon which various texts are written in Latin, the whole having been originally designed in fresco on a blue background sown with golden stars, in the manner of Fra Angelico and the fifteenth century Italians. The canopies beneath the two chapel windows originally sheltered on the entrance side the statue of Charles VII and on the side of the courtyard that of Jacques



95.—FIREPLACE IN GALLERY OF COURT OF APPEAL.



Cœur, sitting on his mule with its shoes reversed, a stratagem he is said to have employed in his flight from Beaucaire.

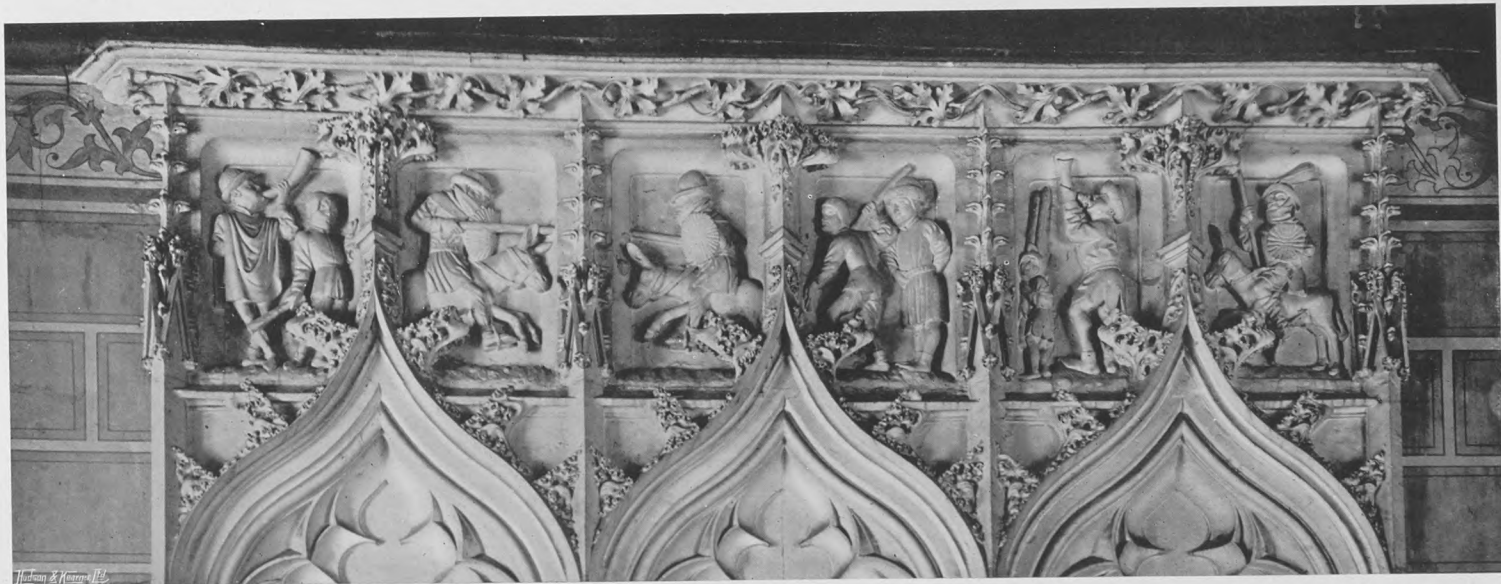
One of the most curious carvings, in what is called the Treasury at the top of the tower, has never been satisfactorily explained, for it is one of the many riddles in this enigmatic house, and has been thought to represent Charles VII and Agnes Sorel, with either the Dauphin (Louis XI) or Jacques Cœur as the third person. Perhaps the most characteristic piece of sculpture is the chimney-piece in that gallery which has a vaulted roof modelled after the reversed hull of one of the merchant's own galleons. The capitals of the pillars that support the mantel are deeply carved, and its upper part represents the



96.—CHIMNEY-PIECE IN GALLERY OF COURT OF APPEAL.

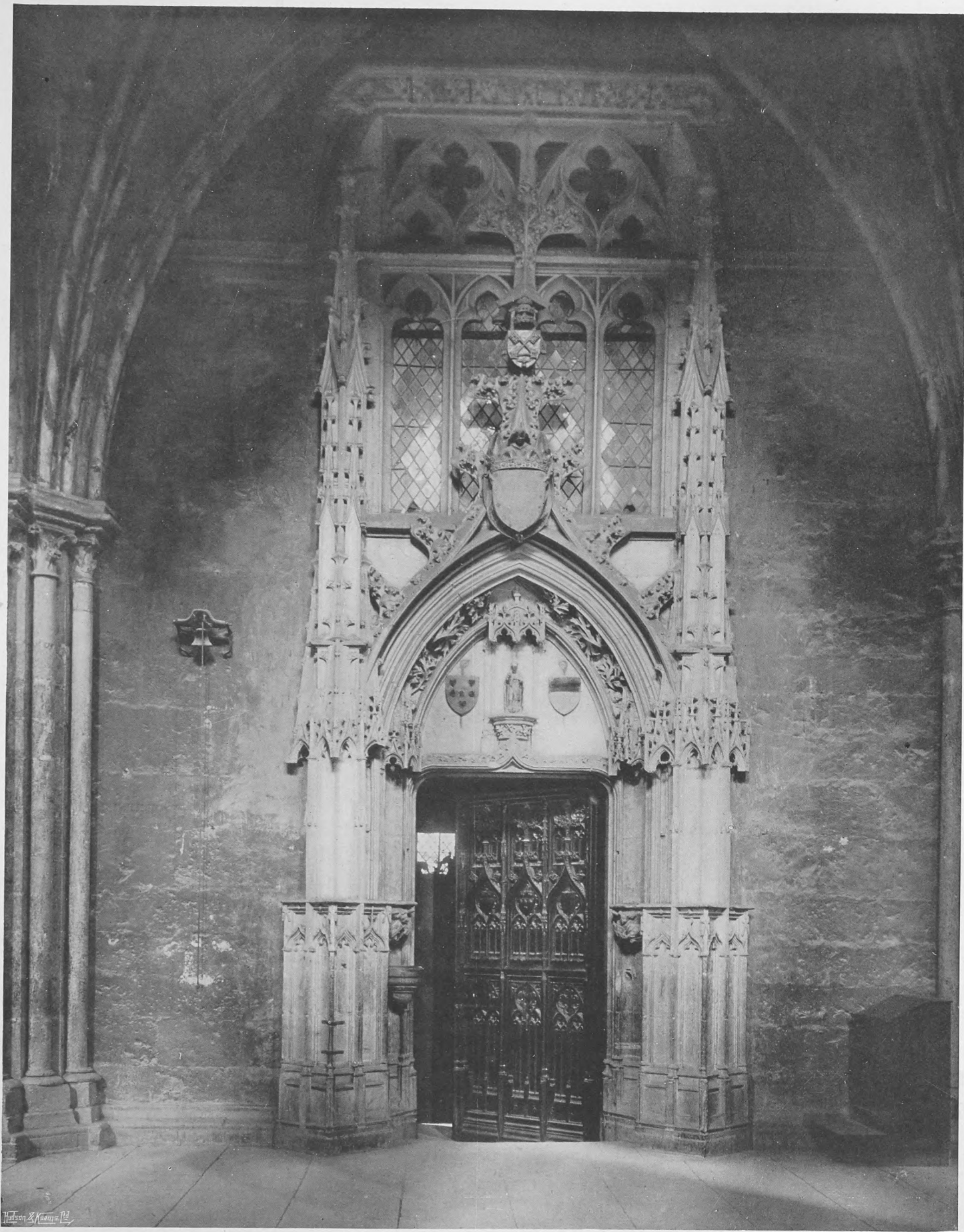
fortifications of a tower or town. Between the little turrets every space is filled up with the head and shoulders of a small figure, full of life and expression; the high head-dresses of the ladies of the house appear in their special canopies above. Upon another chimney-piece is shown what may well be a deliberate burlesque of chivalry, perhaps inspired by the merchant-citizen himself. It represents a tournament carried out by peasants upon donkeys, with farm labourers and others masquerading as squires and armourers. Set where they are, they may, perhaps, be compared to the carvings on the misericordes in churches, which made just as much fun of the ecclesiastics who sat on them as of everything else in earth or heaven or hell. Yet another allegory, of which we have lost the key, is painted on a window which displays one of the builder's canny mottoes: "En bouche close n'entre mouche." On one side of the top panel is a fool in green with a red cap, and his mouth closed by a padlock. The other personage wears a head-dress with ass's ears, bearing the motto: "Dire, faire, taire." In the middle are the arms of Cœur.

His famous "Hôtel de la Chaussée" was not the only thing for which Bourges had to thank Jacques Cœur. In the Cathedral is the sacristy which he built, containing his arms and those of his wife, and the various mottoes associated with his career. Above its central window are



97.—FRIEZE OF THE FIREPLACE IN THE GALLERY OF COURT OF APPEAL.



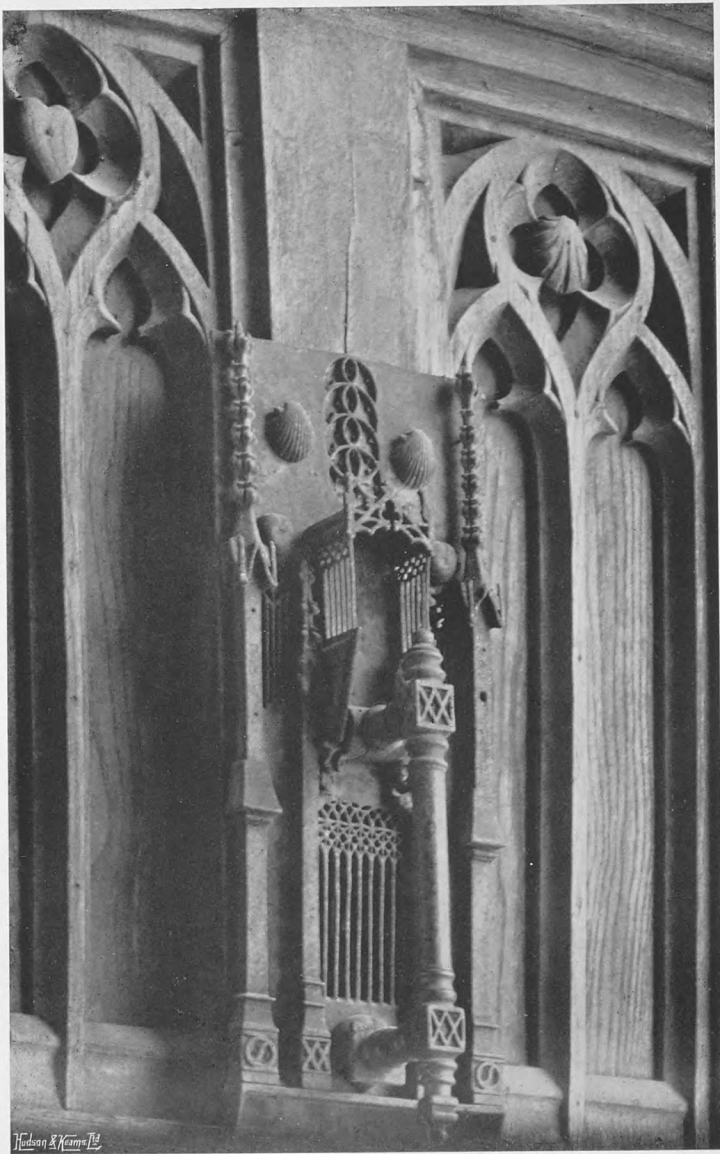


98.—IN BOURGES CATHEDRAL, DOOR IN SACRISTY IN NORTH CHOIR AISLE, BUILT BY JACQUES CŒUR.



the arms of France, with a reference to the Coronation of Charles VII at Rheims, which, as we have seen, had special significance for the man who did so much to help Jeanne d'Arc. In the chapel known as the Chapel of Jacques Cœur in the Cathedral, his arms do not appear at all upon the stone, and only in a microscopical size upon one window. From this it has been argued that we only see this chapel now as it was altered after the disgrace and exile of its builder by the King whose royal arms are in the place of honour, together with those of the Dauphin (Louis XI) and of Marie d'Anjou, the Queen of Charles VII. The other arms are those of the family of Aubespine, who took on this chapel with other possessions from the family of Cœur.

In speaking at some length of the carvings of this Hôtel de la Chaussée, I must not be thought to diminish in any way the importance of Jacques Cœur's house as an imposing and



99.—THE KNOCKER.

very beautiful mass of architecture. Its numberless details make up a splendid whole which forms one of the best models of a French fifteenth century town house in existence. Its doors, as beautiful as they are numerous, produce no impression of complicated disorder. Each fits exquisitely into the scheme of decoration of which it is a part, and though each is different, each also completes the harmonious feeling of the whole. The street façade differs almost as much from that towards the garden as do the two sides of Josselin, and for the same reason—one was for pleasure, the other for defence. The angles of the inner courtyard are quite differently designed, yet the separate beauty of each is restful to the eye and conquers any possible monotony while it makes its individual appeal. The cluster of pinnacles, turrets, window-crests and cornices about the upper walls and roofs is a delight to disentangle as you realise the part each bears in the plan of habitation. But it also forms an ordered design, skilfully variegated yet restrainedly composed, which gives a character and strength to the whole building. It is the dwelling-place not merely of a citizen of Bourges, but of a widely travelled Frenchman, of one who knew the South and East as well as his own country, of one who had not merely friends and agents, but

dwelling-houses also, in many very different parts of France and Europe.

Of these agents Jean de Village of Marseilles was one of the most important, for he had married Jacques Cœur's niece Perrette, and his loyalty in the hour of peril probably did as much as anything to save the fallen merchant-prince from death, or a perpetual dungeon. His enterprises stayed not for their profit on his own side of the Channel only. A document preserved in Paris proves the interesting fact that one of his agents had taken for sale to England a piece of rich fur that had once belonged to Agnes Sorel; and a letter has been reproduced by a contemporary historian which shows the success attending a still more distant mission, entrusted to Jean de Village, who took some of Cœur's merchandise as a present from Charles VII to the Soldan of Egypt, with whom the clever and far-seeing merchant effected a commercial treaty on behalf of the Knights of Rhodes, a stroke of business that brought him benefit from two sides at once. A Bull from the Grand Master of the Order, dated in February, 1448,



reveals the gratitude that one party to the bargain, at any rate, did not wish to conceal. The side issue of the mines (silver, lead and copper) which Jacques Cœur exploited in the Lyons district need only be mentioned as an indication of his ceaseless activity. In this case the King was paid ten per cent. of all net profits. He had a hand, too, in the great salt districts of Languedoc, where the same industry is carried on still in the marshes of Aigues-Mortes and along the coast near Hyères ; and as the holder of a large share in these interests, Jacques Cœur presided, with Tanneguy-Duchatel and others, over the Royal Commission which investigated the revenues of Languedoc in 1444, in order to secure a subsidy for the Royal Exchequer. The States-General accorded Jacques Cœur in 1450 the sum of four thousand livres (on behalf of the Exchequer) for his expenses in maintaining the King's army in Normandy. In 1446 we find him again selected, with Tanneguy-Duchatel and Saint-Vallier, as one of the French Ambassadors to treat for the annexation of Genoa. He failed owing to the treachery of Campofregoso, and in one of the few of his letters which remain he describes, on February 15th, 1446, the reasons for this failure, and the hopes of eventual success that still remain.

Yet one other direction in which the talents of Jacques Cœur were utilised by his Sovereign must still be indicated. The Pragmatic Sanction (which lasted until the Concordat of Francis I was concluded) came into effect in 1438, after an important meeting called by the King at Bourges. Nine years afterwards the schism which so bitterly divided Christendom and the Papacy necessitated the sending of ambassadors to represent the policy of France, and of these Jacques Cœur was one. Again, he took part in the French Embassy to Nicholas V, with Juvénal des Ursins, the historian, and others, in 1448 ; and after making an entry into Rome which is described as of remarkable magnificence, he fell ill with fever and was hospitably nursed to health again within the walls of the Vatican itself, where he made excellent use of his opportunity by securing the Papal sanction for his trading operations with "the infidels." It was largely by the influence of this embassy that the schism was brought to an end, and in its fortunate conclusion we may perhaps see one reason why Jacques Cœur felt certain of a welcome at the Vatican when he escaped from the French king's gaolers.

Participation in events so far reaching and important had their natural result in the aggrandisement and wealth of the man apparently so deeply trusted by his Sovereign. Nicholas, the brother of Jacques Cœur, became Canon of the Sainte Chapelle at Bourges and later Bishop of Luçon. His second niece married the King's Secretary, Jean Bochetel. His daughter married Jacquelin Trousseau, Vicomte de Bourges. His son Henry became Canon of the Cathedral, and another, John, rose to be Archbishop in 1450, when he was only twenty-nine. The occasion was chosen for a magnificent festival in the Hôtel de la Chaussée. A third son was named Ravant, after his father's former partner in the Mint. The fourth, Geoffrey, rose to eminence under Louis XI. The influence and power suggested by these facts were increased by the relative poverty of the Royal Family itself, who were often obliged to borrow ready money from Jacques Cœur for their dresses and the wages of their servants, both Marie d'Anjou and her daughter being among those who were thus glad enough to use him ; as was Margaret of Scotland, the first wife of Louis XI. Among the nobility there was almost as much borrowing on a large scale from the same source. Philippe de Bourbon, the Maréchal de Culan, Georges de la Trémouille, the Comte de Foix, Jean Boucicaut and many more, are to be found in the long and brilliant list of debtors whose securities he held. For a time, in spite of so obvious a peril, all went well. In 1449 the King, who owed him more than anyone, entered Rouen after the campaign won with Jacques Cœur's money, and the merchant rode beside his Sovereign with the King of Sicily, the Count of Maine, Saint Pol, Nevers, Juvénal des Ursins, Brézé and Dunois.

It was the zenith of his glory and the fall was near. Murmurs of discontent, of envy, of pure malice, grew louder and louder. There were curious elements of hostility which we are now almost unable to appreciate. The clash between aristocrat and bourgeois we can easily imagine. The under-currents of intrigue are more difficult to see. Obviously the man had enemies among the merchants of his own class, whose trade he had practically monopolised, and among the highest of the nobility, whose lands he held in pledge. The very scope of his operations enlarged the circle of possible hostilities. The Medici were his enemies, and they





worked through Otto Castellain of Toulouse. The party of the King were his enemies because he was accused of favouring the seditious Dauphin. The Church was his foe because he traded with the infidel. The People were aroused against him on the plea that he had given back a Christian slave to the Turk and provided the Heretics with arms. Finally, the sudden death of Agnes Sorel was seized upon as the pretext for his arrest. He was accused of poisoning her. There was no atom of proof for the assertion ; but it served as well as any other. Justice in those days let nothing escape which once had fallen into her clutches. The prisoner, freed from one baseless charge, was faced with half a hundred others.

Agnes Sorel, of whom I shall have more to say at Loches, had retained the favour of the King for eighteen years. Her three daughters were so many guarantees of its continuance. For the birth of her fourth child she went to her château of Aiméville, near Jumièges. She died in February, 1449, very soon afterwards, and one of the executors of her will was Jacques Cœur. Ten months later her jewellery was sold, and Jacques Cœur bought it for the King, being repaid by a vote of the Estates of Languedoc. The rumours of poisoning had begun long before, and the names of both Jacques Cœur and the Dauphin had been connected with it. One was too high to be attacked. But eighteen months after the death a woman was found to accuse the other. Jeanne de Vendôme made a formal oath that Jacques Cœur had been the poisoner. On July 31st, 1451, the King ordered at Taillebourg his arrest and the sequestration of his goods, from which he immediately seized one hundred thousand crowns for the expenses of the campaign in Guienne against the English.

Antony de Chabannes, that old robber-chief, headed the band of the "vultures of the Court," who promptly swooped upon so rich a quarry. The case was opened at Lusignan in September. I shall not here go into its disgraceful details. In June, 1452, he was still a prisoner at Maillé, and was refused all legal assistance ; he was to defend himself against the accusations by producing proofs of his own honesty ; he was then refused sufficient time to collect the numerous necessary papers and receipts. In January, 1453, the trial was still progressing at Tours. The delay was, in one way, in the prisoner's favour, for the Pope now intervened. But nothing helped him. Wearied out by constant imprisonment, finally tortured into confession, he acknowledged all the charges save that of the murder of Agnes Sorel. But sentence was not immediately pronounced, and the prisoner was dragged on to Poitiers, still further saddened by the death of Macée de Léodepart, his wife, early in that year. On May 29th Juvénal des Ursins pronounced sentence. Public confession of his crimes was to be made, restitution was ordered of various large sums of money, enormous fines were imposed and Jacques Cœur was formally banished from the kingdom.

This by no means ended, however, the persecution of the man who had opened the East and the Levant to French commerce, and had furnished the means for driving the invader out of Guienne and Normandy. He was unable to produce the large sums demanded without communicating with his family and his agents and endeavouring to realise his widely scattered assets. But no delays were permitted him. His property, wherever it could be found by the Royal Commissioners, was at once put up to public auction. In October, 1453, the Bourges sale was held, and the list of plate and furniture (which I wish I had room to publish in full here) gives an excellent idea of the domestic splendour in which at the height of his fortune he had lived. Among these are the curious items of "two English prisoners," one of whom was a son of the Irish Earl of Ormonde, commander of the English garrison at Vernon. He was given to Dunois. The other was sold for twenty-four thousand crowns. The same process went on in Tours, Bourges, Paris, Lyons, Poitiers and Montpellier, and an effort was made by the King's Procurator to seize the person of Jean de Village. But René of Anjou refused to give him up. And in the midst of the confusion Jacques Cœur himself managed to make good his escape as far as Beaucaire, where he sheltered in the Convent of the Cordeliers. From here he wrote a letter (still in existence) to Jean de Village, saying he had enough for immediate needs, and indicating by means of secret signs the places where more money could be found.

The faithful Jean replied in person by coming to Tarascon, and it adds one more romantic memory to that space of swirling grey Rhone between the two famous little towns that Jacques





100.—STAIRCASE TO THE COURT OF APPEAL.



Cœur escaped, with his help, from the ramparts of Beaucaire into a boat that held eighteen of his own men and bore him safely outside the dominions of the King of France. From Tarascon he moved across the Crau to the Etang de Berre, and so by boat again to Marseilles. By the refusal of René to surrender him or his men, and by the loyalty of his old agents, Jacques Cœur was thus enabled to escape by way of Nice to Pisa, and from there he took ship to Ostia and reached the safety of the Vatican and the welcome of the Pope. Here Jean de Village



101.—OLD GARDEN IN PLACE BERRY, BUILT ON ROMAN TOWN WALLS.

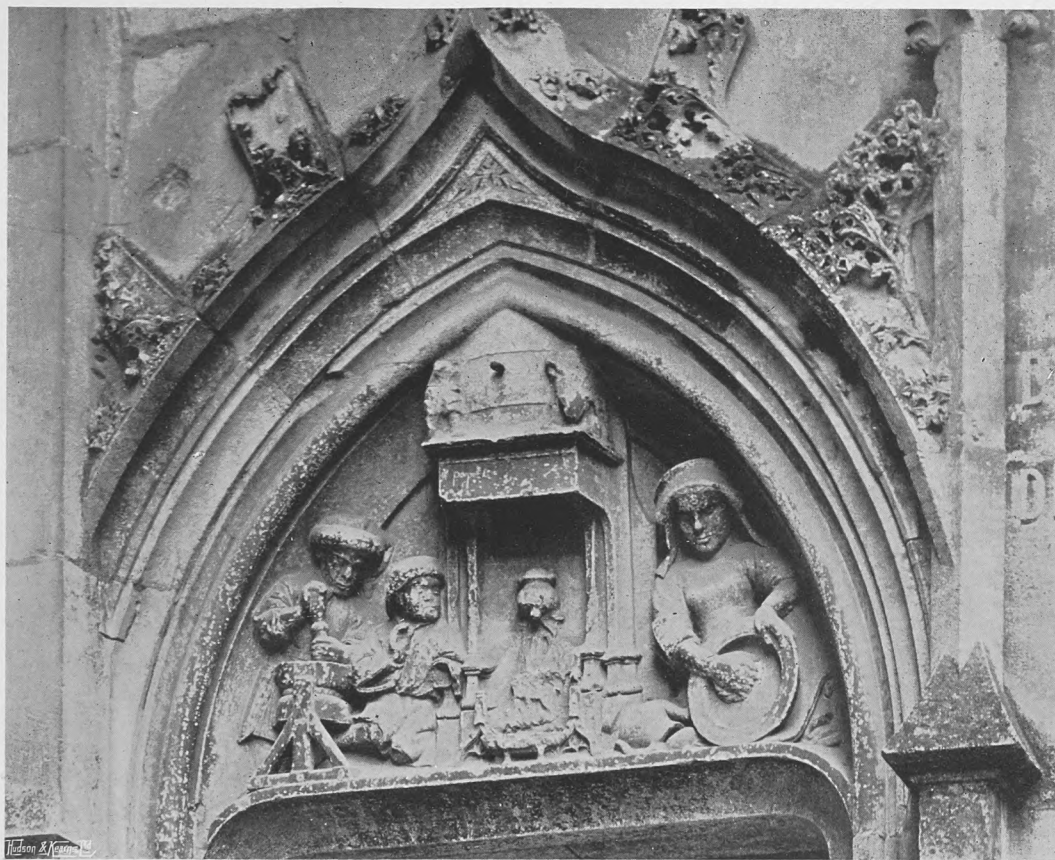
rejoined him, and put into his hands so much money collected from various private sources that the exiled merchant was enabled to be of almost as much help to the Pope as he had been to his ungrateful Sovereign.

Within a very short time Calixtus III, determined to make some counter stroke against the dismay caused throughout Christendom by the sack of Constantinople, appointed Jacques Cœur captain-general of the Church's expedition against the infidels. His first port was the friendly city of Rhodes. From there he sailed to Chios, where in November, 1456, he fell ill of a fever



or from wounds. Before his death he wrote to Charles VII recommending to the royal mercy those children whose father the French king had banished. He died on the 25th of the month and was buried in the Church of the Cordeliers in Chios, where the French sailors saw his tomb in 1501.

His memory was only partially vindicated by his children, but their efforts have proved at any rate that Michelet's contemptuous estimate of his character and attainments must be revised. His "procès de réhabilitation," as useless as was Jeanne d'Arc's, was necessarily not so complete, although it lasted thirty years. But it resulted in the restitution to his heirs of much of his property in Bourges and elsewhere. His famous house was sold for fifteen thousand livres to Antoine Turpin in 1501, and by him sold again to Claude de l'Aubespine in 1552, by whose descendant it was passed on to Colbert, the Minister of Louis XIV, in 1679. He sold it to the town of Bourges for thirty-three thousand livres in 1682, and it has not changed hands again. By a curious and somewhat sarcastic revolution of fate, considering the injustice suffered by its builder, it was made the High Court of the Province.



102.—SCULPTURE OVER DOOR TO THE KITCHENS.



## CHAPTER VI.

## LOCHES.\*

Strong as time and as faith sublime—clothed round with shadows of hopes and fears,  
 Nights and morrows and joys and sorrows, alive with passion of prayers and tears—  
 Stands the shrine that has seen decline eight hundred waxing and waning years.  
 Aisle and nave that the whelming wave of time has whelmed not or touched or neared,  
 Arch and vault without stain or fault, by hands of craftsmen we know not reared,  
 Time beheld them and time was quelled ; and change passed by them as one that feared.

**A**MID the gigantic mass of masonry heaped up during some four hundred years at Loches the building which most interests the modern architect is the Collegiate Church with its astounding pyramids of stone, its strangely carved entrance, its unique position not merely in the material site of its foundations, but in the history of architecture. Yet it is the buildings on each side of this church, around it, and beneath the shadow of its ancient walls, which are most eagerly visited by the French or foreign traveller ; the vast square donjon keep of that mighty man of war, Fulk Nerra ; or the prisons where languished the traitor-bishops and that brilliant, ill-starred Ludovico Sforza, husband of Beatrice d'Este ; or the double façade of dwelling-rooms which shows the feudal fortress at one end and the Renaissance palace at the other, just as the changing styles may be observed upon the outside walls and the inner courtyard of Josselin in Brittany.

In much the same way the tourist, anxious for correct impressions of forgotten history, goes to his Loches in order to wonder over the cruelties of Louis XI or the piety of Anne of Brittany, and perchance to add to these some vague remembrance of François I and Diane de Poitiers. But to me the real interest of the place has always centred in that beautiful little tomb which commemorates the virtues and tenderly recalls the name of Agnes Sorel. I shall not here enlarge upon the architectural peculiarities of St. Ours ; but I cannot refrain from choosing the King's favourite as the main theme of these pages, and for much the same reason as your specialised architect would have selected the Collegiate Church. Very little is known about either, and each may be said to be without a parallel. Agnes was the daughter of the Attorney to the Count of Clermont, but her mother, Catherine de Maignelais, was of noble blood, and she was born in 1409, at Fromenteau, near Loches, beneath the soft sky of Touraine. She inherited the best of its attractions, and preserved them even in the business-like and intriguing atmosphere of Lorraine, whither she was sent as one of the youngest maids-of-honour in the Court of Isabelle de Lorraine, wife of the good King René of Anjou, Provence and Sicily ; and we know that in 1444 this Princess paid her only twenty pounds a year. It was to seek the clemency of Charles VII in favour of her imprisoned husband that Isabelle de Lorraine (with her young ladies) is said to have journeyed to the Court of France, where Yolande of Anjou, mother-in-law of the King, was her own mother-in-law as well. Negotiations were wonderfully assisted, it is said, by the attachment which had rapidly declared itself between Charles VII and the pretty maid-of-honour ; and it is fairly clear that neither Yolande nor Isabelle was opposed to using the fair Agnes as their mouthpiece. She was the second maiden to come out of Lorraine and influence the destinies of France. The first, the soldier-saint of Domrémy, was burnt upon French soil ; but her work lived after her ; and there is no need to doubt that Agnes Sorel may have helped to finish that conquest of the English which Joan of Arc began. Upon a pendant close to her tower at Loches is the carving of a desperate soldier, thrusting through, with his last effort, the invading English leopard. At any rate, this may be one reason why,

\* Monument Historique de France.

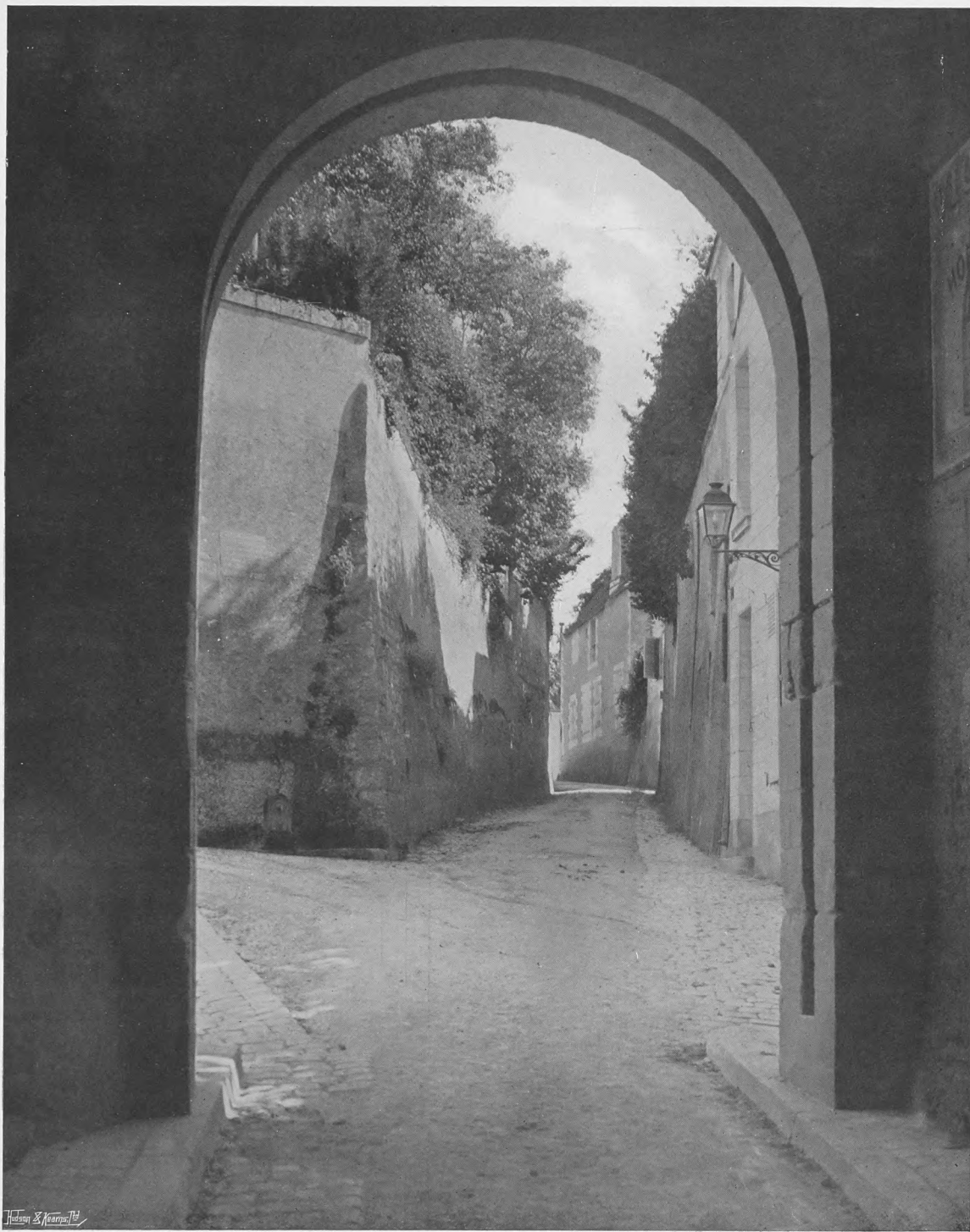


in the long line of Royal mistresses which contains such famous names as Diane de Poitiers, Gabrielle d'Estrées, the Montespan, the Pompadour, not one has enjoyed such lasting popularity, or has suffered so little from abuse and prejudice, as Agnes.

The general verdict is reflected in many an author, though the least authentic testimonies are probably the best known nowadays: the lazily appreciative quatrain of François I and the legendary call to heroism chronicled by Brantôme, who was born more than a century after the lady whose sayings he professes to recount in the sentimental romanticisms echoed by Béranger's lines. But her acquaintance with the French King certainly began before Isabelle de Lorraine's visit, which was actually made in 1444, and not about thirteen years earlier, as Michelet suggested; for the first daughter of Agnes and Charles VII (mentioned in manuscripts of both that King and Louis XI) was born in 1434, when she would be about twenty-five, and her second two years later. All that is certain is that Agnes was a member of the household of Isabelle de Lorraine ten years after she bore her first child, though it cannot have been much later that she was known at the French Court, and accepted throughout France, as the mistress of the King, the first "Maitresse en titre" in French history.

Some contemporary chroniclers did not hesitate to express their feelings on the subject. "King Charles," writes the Burgundian Jaques Du Clerq, a far from unprejudiced witness, "changed his habits completely after peace had been made with Burgundy, and instead of saying his prayers as before, took a young woman called 'La Belle Agnès' who lived in greater splendour than the Queen herself, and was one of the loveliest women in France."

When Charles gave her the happily named estate of Beaulté, on the Marne near Vincennes, Monstrelet at once remarked on the appropriateness of giving so beautiful a lady that particular



103.—GATEWAY BENEATH THE CASTLE.

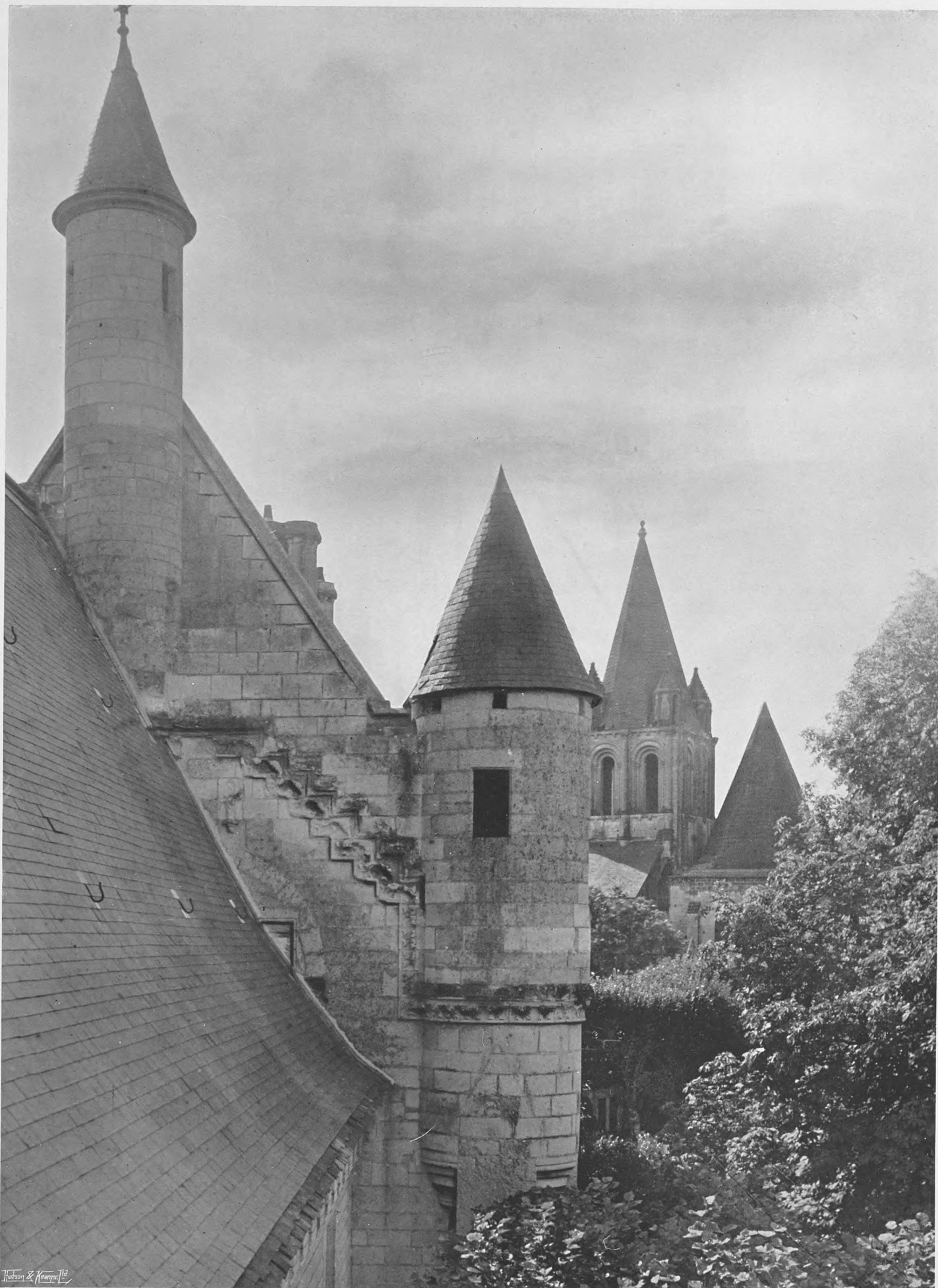


property, for she now became "Dame de Beauté" in both senses. Other princely gifts soon followed, such as the manors and lands at Roquecesière, Issoudun, Vernon-sur-Seine, and Anneville, near Jumièges, together with an annual pension of three thousand pounds, which is recorded in the archives of the Chambre des Comptes. Even the sour and sinister Dauphin (afterwards Louis XI) had brought to her the tapestry he plundered from the Comte d'Armagnac at l'Isle-Jourdain in 1442. It was not likely or natural, however, that so extraordinary a position should for long remain unchallenged, especially as one of the few sincere sentiments of Louis' youth seems to have been his affection for his mother, Marie d'Anjou, the publicly slighted Queen. Nicole Gilles, in his *Chronicles* for 1445, records the curious fact that the Privy Council recommended Her Majesty to dissimulate her legitimate objection to an attachment which they considered for the general benefit of the realm. The Queen's resentment was not lessened by the open sympathy of her close friend, the Duchess of Burgundy, who came to visit her; but Olivier de la Marche (another Burgundian writer), in describing the beauty and power of the favourite, is constrained to add: "She was one of the loveliest women I ever saw, and she brought to the King's notice various young men-at-arms and other friends by whom the King was well served later on." If you take this testimony with the significant advice given the Queen by the Privy Council, I think it must be admitted that Charles VII, who was always known as "the best-served King France ever had," must have owed not a little of the capable loyalty about him to the counsels and often to the direct intervention of Agnes Sorel. I may be able to suggest something of what he actually accomplished later on; but it is sufficient here to note that Jacques Cœur, whose whole-hearted support was given to Jeanne d'Arc, is not likely to have been the close friend he was with Agnes if there had not been sound patriotic reasons to favour his support, as well as that prudence in personal politics which is one of the characteristics of his chequered and extraordinary career.

We may, perhaps, pass over the insinuations of Thomas Basin (that both the King and Agnes were in turn "unfaithful" to each other) as the desire of an exiled bishop to point an obvious moral by exaggerating an undoubted laxity. But there is nothing in George Chastelain's sentences which we can consider inappropriate to the actual position of affairs. "Her apartments in the Royal palace," he writes, "were finer than those of the Queen, with bed-furniture, tapestry, linen, plate and jewellery all better than Her Majesty enjoyed." He goes on to elaborate the splendour of her dresses, and the pride with which she showed the beauty of her neck and shoulders; and it is an interesting coincidence that the only contemporary painting which can be considered an authentic portrait is careful to undrape that matchless figure. The best technical opinion attributes this work to Jean Fouquet of Tours, who painted it for the church of Melun to the order of Etienne Chevalier, King's Councillor, for whom he also finished a beautiful *Book of Hours* containing the portrait of Charles VII. After remaining undisturbed in its original position for several centuries this picture eventually reached the museum in Antwerp, and has been reproduced in Grèsy's book on Notre Dame de Melun, and in *Moyen Age et Renaissance* from a copy lent by M. Vallet de Viriville. The original was at one time in the possession of M. Brentano of Frankfort.

Such details may here be considered out of place; but to me it is invariably of interest to try and trace something of the authentic features of any woman famous for her beauty long ago. It is a pursuit almost as vain as it is fascinating, but I have never been cured of it by the threadbare argument that different centuries have admired different types of beauty, or that a woman universally appreciated in one country can fail to rouse any enthusiasm in another. Speaking of civilised countries, and of those civilisations which have left some artistic record, I can never admit that either position represents the truth. The influences of climate or surrounding conditions are so extremely slow and subtle in their effect that we should have to penetrate the mists of prehistoric development to recognise them even by the uncertain processes of prejudiced comparison. There were beauties in ancient Egypt who would have had London at their feet to-day. There was a loveliness in Pheidian Hellas which modern hearts can worship just as fervently. But it is, undoubtedly, the fact that nearly a thousand years of European history have left scarce one convincing memory of a pretty woman. The mere mention of those centuries of unrecorded grace is the best refutation of the idea that none existed to record.





104.—LA TOUR D'AGNES SOREL.



There must have been some reason why no artist (or scarcely any) had skill sufficient to record it. We seem to get nearer to the type we recognise in carving than in painting; for at a time when water colour had reached its height in the illumination of manuscripts, which reveal hardly anything we can now admit as beautiful in a woman's face, we find on the stones of the great cathedrals the carved faces of women as lovely as any in the world, and far more instinct with mortal passion than the impassive divinities of the Greek, who only lets the seductiveness of his feminine humanity appear in the statuettes of Tanagra. Even when the Van Eycks made the next great step in art, they painted in oils a type which the illuminated missal seems to have consecrated as the only one respectable for portrait painters, who were apparently bound by



105.—DETAIL OF DOORWAY.

conventions of religious origin for far longer than has sometimes been realised. But Beauty, which has no boundaries of time or space, soon came into her kingdom. She triumphed over those accidental foibles of the female heart, the vacillating fashion of a dress; over the eccentricities of barbers; over the pruderies of celibate ecclesiastics. The artist's eye at last could see, at last could render what it saw, and dared to limn the loveliness of structure, the tender charms of lip and eye, the melting kindliness of expression and of character. In how few of the many contemporary representations (if in any!) do we realise the fatal beauty that was the undoubted gift of Mary Queen of Scots? Yet she lived and loved more than a hundred years after Agnes Sorel was in her grave; and of Agnes we know only Jean Fouquet's picture and the monument at Loches. The latter may be dismissed at once; for hardly any of the original marble (if it were marble) now remains, and the stucco which replaced it is neither masterly in handiwork nor convincing in treatment; for it is meant to represent, as the inscription near it hints, one who was not only sweet as the dove, and snowy as the swan, but also "*plus vermeille que la flamme*," one whose face had "the springing beauty of the flowers in May." So I have not reproduced here a figure which would only leave a wrong impression. This statue at Loches, untouched by the Huguenots of the sixteenth century, did not escape the insensate spoliations of the Revolution. The canons of the Collegiate had so far suffered an ungrateful pietism to overcome their charitable instincts as to request the removal of her tomb soon after her death. But Louis XI, with a grim irony characteristic of the man, advised them that the benefit of her gifts would in that case be removed as well. In 1777, however, Louis XVI made no such conditions in granting the reiterated prayers of their successors, and on March 5th the tomb was moved to the small room where it may now be seen. Her ashes were eventually allowed to rest in a bronze urn and left

under the guardianship of the Sous-Préfet, whose official residence is still in the Château of Loches. And, save for that touch of sincerity in the bared bosom, Jean Fouquet's portrait tells us just as little of the "*Dame de Beauté*," who in 1444 gave the church of Loches a gold cross, a silver-gilt statue of Mary Magdalen, made as a shrine for relics, the great tapestry representing Susanna and the Elders, and several rich endowments. We must turn to other indications.

The marble statue of Agnes in the Abbey of Jumièges, which she remembered so generously in her will, represented her praying, with a heart in her hands, which she offered to the Virgin Queen. The epitaph, though silent as to her physical beauty, recorded her "pitiful loving





106.—THE FEUDAL FORTRESS.



kindness to all men and especially to the poor and to the churches." But the monument was destroyed in the religious wars of the sixteenth century. Two inscriptions in her honour, in the same church, have been preserved in contemporary records. One emphasises the delicate contrasts of pink and "swan-white" in her complexion with a fervour which I refuse to attribute wholly to the conventional praise of a great lady. The other again draws vivid attention to her unforgettable attractions. Of these, all that is known now with absolute certainty is that more than three hundred years after her death her teeth were all still perfect, and that her height cannot have been more than five feet five inches. Her light brown hair was dressed much after the manner fashionable in France in 1780, with heavy curls on each side of the face

and a triple braid which hung over the nape of the neck, but was turned and fastened at the end upon the top of the head.

In all the eighteen years during which she enjoyed the uninterrupted favour of the King, the fashion of woman's dress in France was changing more and more. The outcries occasionally heard during that period (and echoed in the sumptuary laws) against the "outrageous independence and luxury" of the ladies are somewhat difficult to understand to-day; for we know that the most intimate garments of princesses were sometimes of rough serge or woollen material, and lace



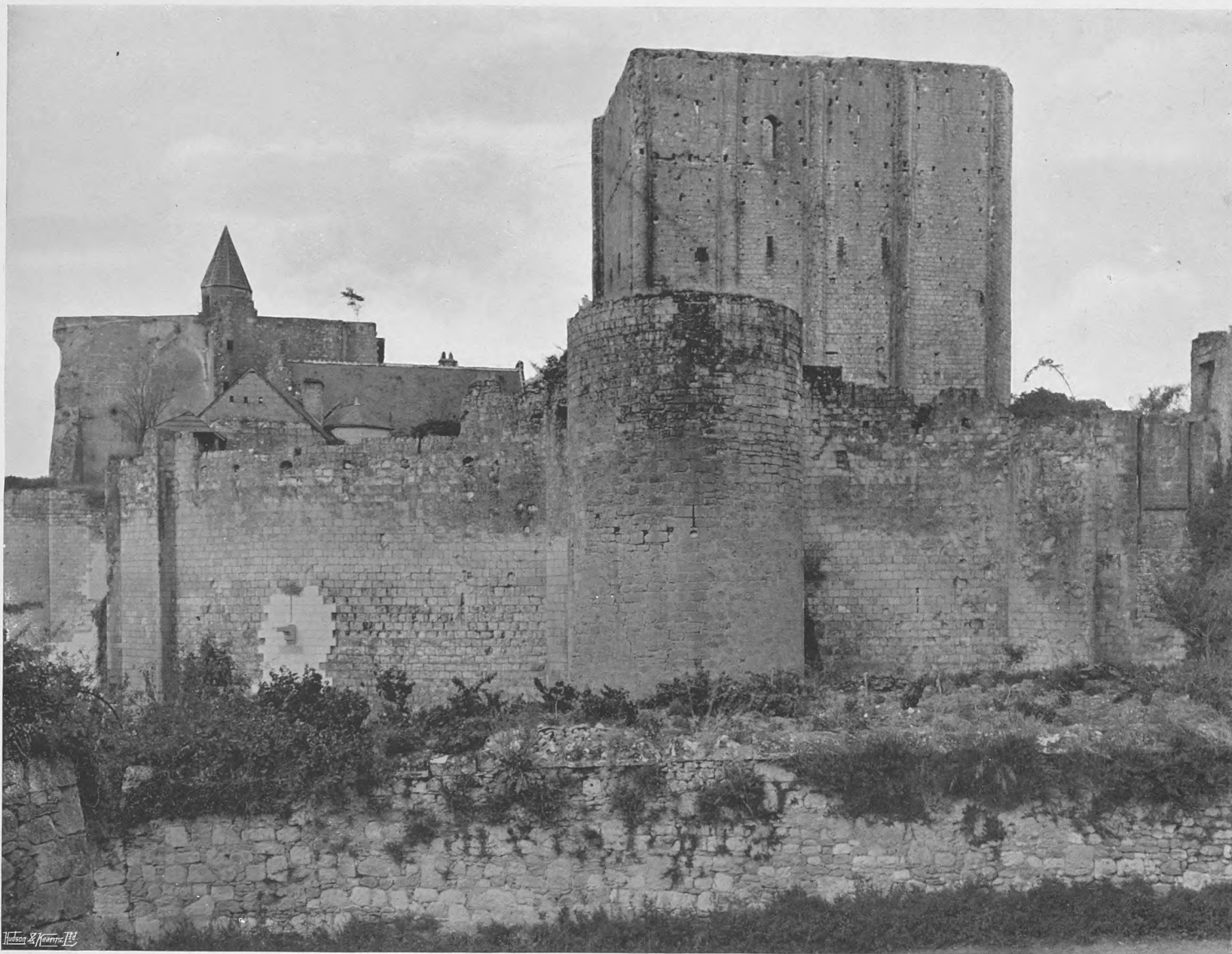
107.—THE RENAISSANCE FAÇADE.

had not produced any of its seductive provocations at all. So society ran itself hopelessly into debt on bills for cloth of gold and silver, for silks and figured damask, for jewellery and gems. Jacques Cœur made his due profit out of all, being a man of sound business ability when he stayed at home; and it was no doubt to his help and his far-flung merchant traffic with the East that the fair Agnes owed a distinction which will for ever assure her place in the distracting chronicles of feminine apparel; for she seems to have been the first lady who habitually wore cut diamonds instead of the rough, unpolished native gems which hitherto had ornamented the crowns of Sovereigns and the dresses of their Queens. It would be difficult to conceive a more fatal blow to the supremacy of every other well-dressed woman



at the Court of France. Luckily, they none of them left memoirs ; otherwise I might have a very different tale to give you from that which the paucity of documents still permits me to construct for Agnes. I confess that I should like to hear more expert criticism of this difficult point ; but the art of diamond-cutting seems to have originated in the East, and if indeed the favourite of Charles VII was the first Frenchwoman to dazzle rivals with it, she must have got her jewels from Jacques Cœur, whom she named as the executor of her will. Alas ! none of them can now be traced. The King himself evidently realised their worth, and she was scarcely buried when he wrote to Jacques Cœur for them, and pledged him the revenues of Languedoc to buy them.

The Journal of the Bourgeois de Paris relates that Agnes made her entry into Paris in 1448 "with all the state of a Duchess," as we can well understand ; and the writer permits himself



108.—THE DONJON OF FULK NERRA.

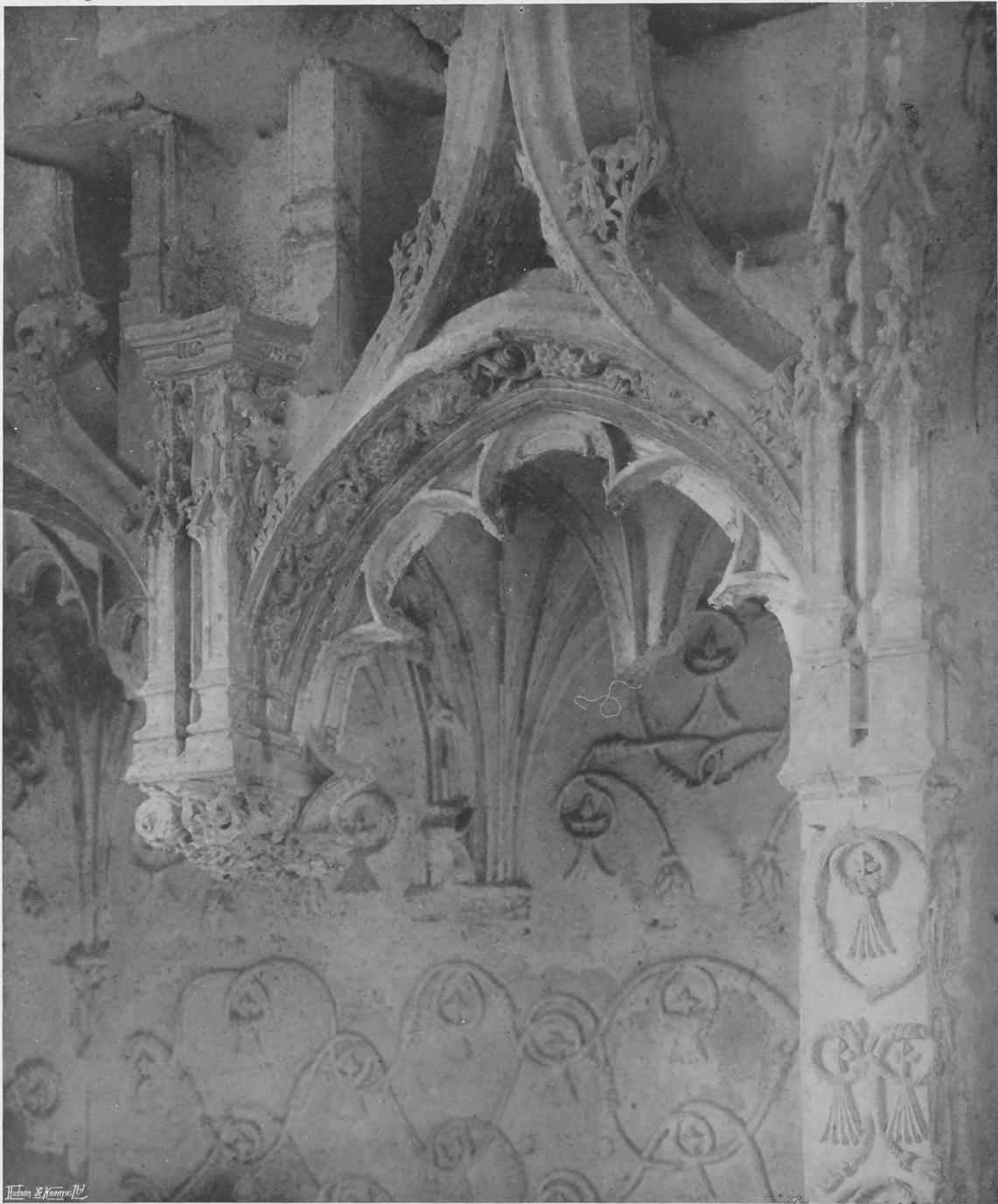
free comment on the unfortunate position of the Queen, "who then found it her best policy to suffer in silence." But chroniclers more near the throne preserved a prudent reserve. Neither Matthieu de Coucy nor Martial d'Auvergne says a word about her. Their wisdom is all the more clearly shown by the unnecessary garrulousness of the "Religieux de Saint Denis," the Court historian. Flying in the face alike of facts and of popular knowledge, this excellent but misguided man conducts (in his well-meaning pages) a kind of cross-examination of the courtiers round the King, who shook their heads with admirable unanimity and most satisfactorily refused to produce any immoral evidence at all. But our "Religieux" is bound to admit that the lady "publicly enjoyed all kinds of worldly pleasure and delight, and wore the most exquisite dresses and furs, with necklaces of gold and jewels, as was natural to that youth and beauty which so charmed the King in one who was everywhere held to be the loveliest woman of her time."



That loveliness has still escaped us, though so many writers have proclaimed its powers. Its charms seem as elusive as those of the fair Yseult in that *Romance of Tristan* which Luce de Gast had written so long before Agnes or her Royal lover had been born. But in what we can still trace of her, I seem to see some fair reflection of that legendary lady "whose hair shone like beaten gold, and her forehead was whiter than the lily. The curve of her eyebrows was like the bow in heaven after rain, and they were separated by a Milky Way that was of a breadth justly proportioned to them. Her eyes shone like twin stars, more brightly than the emerald. In her face there was the beauty of the dawning day that shows both red and white, each in its several glory. Her lips were somewhat swelling and ripe with generous colour; her teeth between them showed as pure as pearls in level ordinance; and the sweet breath of her was more fragrant than spices or the garden's rose. Her chin was firm and polished as marble. Her neck and bosom were as white as milk, her shoulders straight, her arms long and slender with delicate hands, soft skin, and beautiful finger-nails. Her waist was of so slight a build that you might clasp it in two hands; and of the rest of her it is more fitting that the heart should feel than that the tongue should speak. . . ."

One other trace of her is left, in the five letters (four of which are entirely in her own hand) first published in 1886 by Pierre Clément, who gathered together most of the facts on which this essay has been based. One of these was written to Pierre de Brézé, Seigneur de Varenne,

Seneschal of Normandy, a title which seems to have become almost hereditary in his family. This Pierre was imprisoned by Louis XI, almost as soon as the sinister son of Charles VII had reached the throne; and though some think that his freedom was bought by the help he gave the turbulent Margaret of Anjou at the siege of Alnwick, others say that he owed it to the marriage of his son Jacques with one of Agnes Sorel's daughters. Jacques found himself obliged to stab his wife to death for flagrant infidelity, and it was their son Louis (another Grand Seneschal of Normandy) who married Diane de



109.—DETAILS IN THE ORATORY OF ANNE OF BRITTANY.





110.—ALTAR IN THE ORATORY OF ANNE OF BRITTANY.

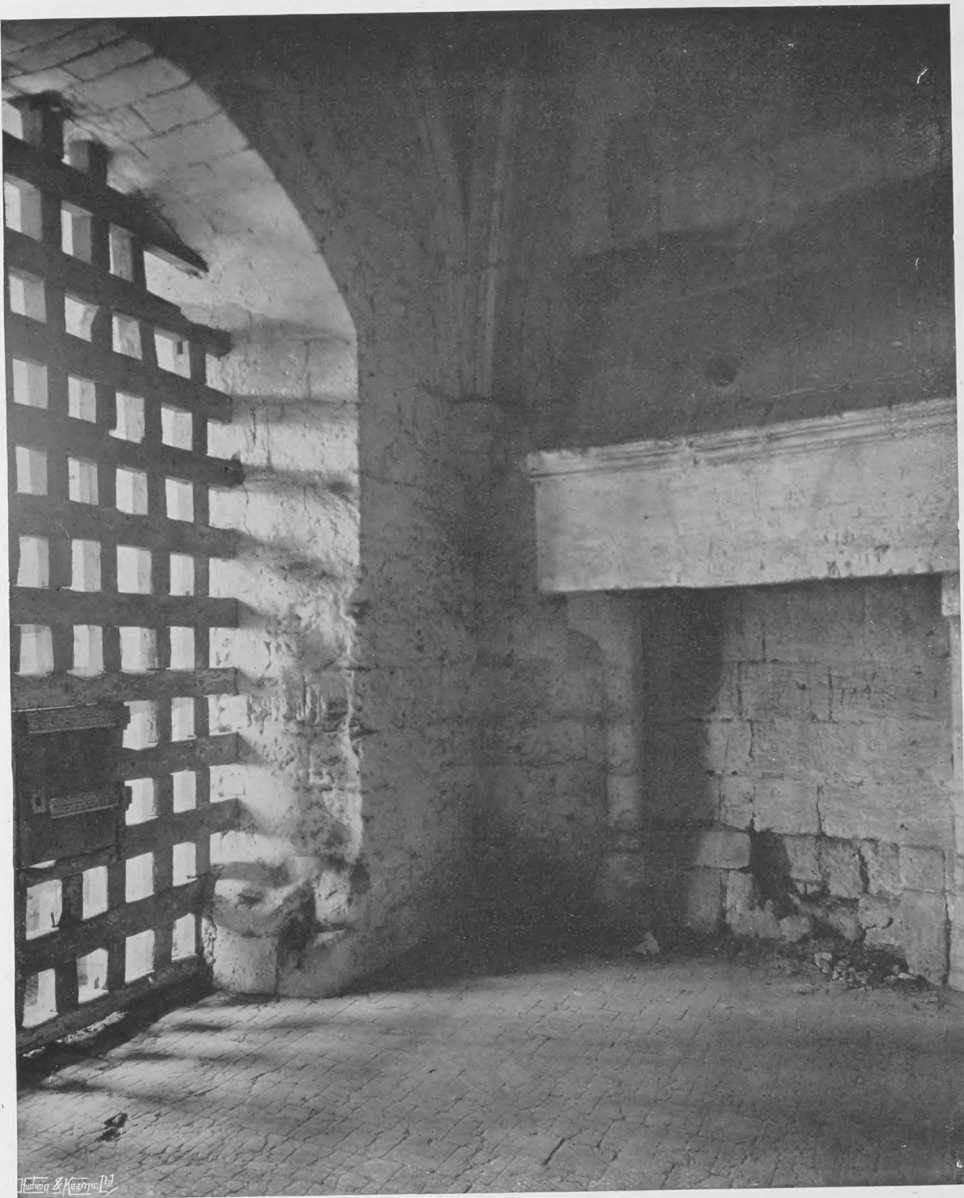
Poitiers. The story thus begun in the letter of Agnes from Amboise ends in the dungeons far beneath her monument at Loches, for this Louis de Brézé it was who gave Francis I the information concerning the Constable Bourbon's conspiracy which resulted in the imprisonment of the Bishops of Puy and Autun. To his horror, however, Louis discovered that his wife's father, Jean de Poitiers, Seigneur de Saint Vallier, was inextricably implicated in the same crime, and was condemned to the same punishment in the cells of Loches. Only the entreaties of Diane herself saved her father's life after his hair had turned white amid the pestilential darkness of his dungeon, and it is worth noticing that, just as the man who (unwillingly enough) was responsible for Saint Vallier's incarceration was a descendant of Charles VII's mistress, so the prisoner himself (and therefore Diane) was of the blood of Marguerite de Sassenaye, mistress of Louis XI, whose daughter married Aymar de Poitiers.



In the days of Agnes Sorel the cells of Loches had not yet held the most famous of their inmates, though she speaks of some ruffianly burglars who certainly deserved to be locked into them; for her letter to her "good friend and compère," Pierre de Brézé, informs him that "we have had quite an adventure with a man said to be a ruffian of the baser sort, who got one of my women into conversation and entered the house at night by help of a crowbar, where he stole a little chest of jewelry and relics of which this woman was in charge. But in trying to escape he fell over the escarpment of a ditch and was captured, which was due, they say, to the power exerted by the relics." She adds that her own health is good and that she walks "every day by the banks of the Loire." Her second letter, written from Coucy, to the same friend, solicits a small place among his servants for a poor man who had lost his means of livelihood in the wars. In yet a third letter, from Plessis lez Tours to the Provost Marshal of La Chesnaye, the same "pitiful loving-kindness to the poor" recorded in her epitaph at Jumièges is again

evidenced; for she begs (and not, of course, in vain) that he will discharge certain unhappy wanderers who had been threatened with punishment for gathering wood in the Royal forests.

The other two letters are to Madame Marguerite de Belleville, the daughter of Charles VI and Odette de Champdivers, and in one of them (which she only signed) she writes from Candé to tell her friend about an accident to "little Robin," who was shot by mistake, when behind a bush, during a wild-boar hunt, but was being well nursed towards a good recovery. The last, dated from Razillé, the only place mentioned in the letters which I cannot trace as having been a Royal residence, is a request to give the bearer her dove-grey dress lined with white, and "as many gloves as can possibly be found, for the dressing-case has been mislaid which held all mine; and the bearer will give you my greyhound,

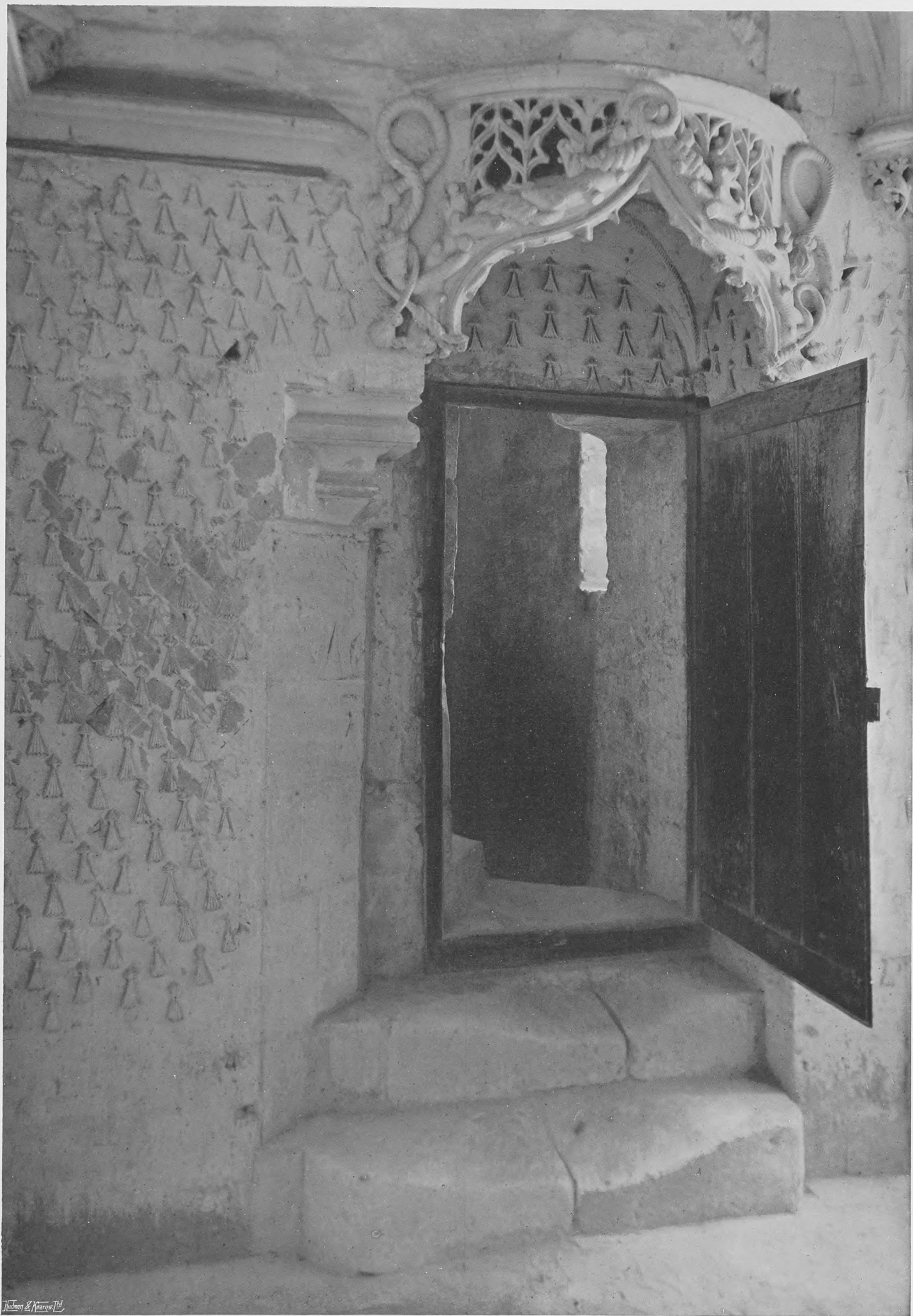


III.—ONE OF THE GUARDROOMS.

Carpet, for you to take care of; and nobody must take him out hunting because he will obey neither call nor whistle, and so I send him back to you, for it would be great grief to me if he were lost."

This is a correspondence that would do no one's reputation any harm; and if Agnes took care of poor people who were not connected with her, it was but natural that she should secure a little of the ecclesiastical promotion that was open for those of her own blood. Geoffrey Soreau, her nephew, became an abbot, and finally Bishop of Nîmes. In 1448 she had had three daughters by Charles VII, and in January, 1449, her fourth child was born at Anneville, close to Jumièges, where she had gone in order to be near the King during his campaign against the English in Normandy. She died of a fever soon afterwards, leaving a large bequest to





112.—THE ORATORY OF ANNE OF BRITTANY.



Jumièges and Loches and several other churches, with Jacques Cœur as one of the three executors of her will. How the merchant-prince was later on accused of poisoning her, and how Jeanne, the principal witness, was finally convicted of perjury, has been told in other pages, where has also been indicated that extraordinary advance in civilisation which was made in France under the reign of Charles VII. There is, after all, no space left to me even to indicate it here ; but it may, briefly, be said to have facilitated that fall of feudalism which was the final achievement of his son, Louis XI. One instance of the wonderful developments going on everywhere may be picked out in the invention of printing and of woodcuts, which took place during the life of Agnes. That alone implied a revolution in thought, in art, in the whole attitude of man, both to the past and to the future, which cannot be exaggerated in its significance and its practical results.

The changing nature of the times is typified in that façade of Loches (now inhabited by the Sous-Préfet) which begins with the Tower of Agnes Sorel, goes on with the wing of Charles VII, and ends with the Renaissance windows of Louis XII and the oratory of Anne of Brittany. These stand, as it were, alone and distinct, above the roofs of the climbing town, looking out over the surrounding country. Divided from them by the stone pyramids of the twelfth century Collegiate Church are the splendid fortress of Fulk Nerra and the prisons where so many famous culprits tried to cheat the misery of their long hours of punishment by carving inscriptions on their dungeon walls. More of the subterranean passages than I was able to penetrate myself have been unearthed lately. But it is a gruesome task to wander through them. They have seen enough authentic horrors to need no modern ghostly fabrications and they have been described in many a volume since I wrote my first impressions of this extraordinary place some twenty years ago. Being more youthful at that time, I went carefully into various harrowing details about the long-drawn agony of the victims of the Royal wrath. They were true enough ; but they have now passed from my mind. The line by which Loches lives in my memory is :

Ci-gist noble damoyselle Agnes Seurelle  
en son vivant Dame de Beaulté.



CHAPTER VII.

JOSSELIN, MORBIHAN.\*

"Des héros trépassés  
Tu garde la mémoire,  
Tours, remparts et fossés,  
Contez-nous leur histoire."

THE traveller from Paris by way of Chartres, and westwards through Le Mans, finds little change in the countryside until he has passed Laval. But at Vitré the fortifications of a frontier become evident; and just beyond Rennes is Montfort, a name as significant in England or in Languedoc as here. Further west still and a little to the south is Ploermel. He is in Brittany, and France is many a league behind. Though it has changed Nantes from a Breton capital to a French provincial town, the valley of the Loire is too far southward to touch with its royal influences the rough land of oak and granite we have reached. The Morbihan, a department fashioned from the south-east corner of the ancient Duchy, is itself a "little sea," as the old name calls it, a province with as many islands as there are days in the year; and even as far inland as the stronghold of Clisson the Constable, the home of the mighty family of the Rohans, the walls of Josselin are carved with sea monsters and encrusted with seaweed, though they are sheltered from the Atlantic gales by the sturdy buttress of the Landes de Lanvaux. From St. Malo to St. Nazaire, and from either to the apex of the triangle at Ushant, the land is dominated by the wind and spray of ocean, by its rugged strength, its fatal and unceasing mystery. Anne, the last Breton Queen over the Bretons, was in her way typical of the race—independent, obstinate, superstitious, brave, with the silent courage of the sailor sinking in a storm. In the War of Succession, which desolated the Duchy in the fourteenth century, "Jeanne la Flamme," that Countess of Montfort whom Froissart likens to a lioness, broke through the besiegers' lines at Hennebon and burnt the French camp before they could get near her. Against her another Jeanne, Countess of Penthievre by birth and Princess of Blois by marriage, was struggling for the crown of Brittany. And yet a third Jeanne, whose husband was beheaded in Paris during these quarrels, brought up a son so valiantly to warfare that he became Olivier de Clisson, Constable of France.

Where the women could do so much, the men have been no less adventurous. But with a difference. Mother and wife, sister or daughter, the Breton women have from the earliest years learnt what it is to weep at home while their men are drowning; and that long sorrow sometimes bursts into a torrent of unchecked resentment that sweeps all before it. The men are steadier, more oppressed with grim realities. It is no imagination which they face; they sail each day upon the sea that shall engulf them in their fathers' and their brothers' common sepulchre; they return home freed for a moment from its perils to no ecstasies of extravagant delight. The wind that stirs their cottage door has swept across the grave that waits for them beyond the rollers of the beach. The beating of the wings of Death is in the air they breathe. The monuments of a dead faith and a forgotten people are in all their fields. Throughout the sombre moorlands of the Morbihan, its ancient hatreds, its old wars, its blood-stained feuds have left an imperishable memory. Cromlech and dolmen and menhir blot with the horror of their mysterious shade these valleys of the shadow; and even their gigantic bulk of stone seems scarce enough to guard in their unquiet graves the quickening forms of ancient evil that are ever ready to emerge. The oak trees rustle with a sound as of the moan of Merlin, imprisoned by the cruelty of pale-faced Vivien in these haunted forest glades. Through the sea-mist the

\* The Property of the Duc de Rohan.



scanty sunbeams rarely struggle. It is the dominion of magic and the moon—the kingdom of Morgana and her baleful charms; and over all broods the vast and silent melancholy of a dying race.

Wherever you may see to-day a fictitious activity, a ghastly mesmerising of the old corpse into artificial life, it is in such seaports as Paimpol, Lorient, Quiberon and St. Nazaire; or in Brest, Richelieu's harbour, a place as artificial in its purely naval industries as Cherbourg in its military interests. The old home life of the real Duchy has decayed in Dinan, in Tréguier, Lannion, Morlaix, Quimper or Hennebon, where the old towns were built at the farthest point up-stream touched by the tide, in centuries when pirates fleeced the seas, and when the commerce of the seaboard was its wrecks. The old instinct was the right one. The sea will ever be the Breton's enemy. But he is its child; and to his early breeding he has been ever true as long as he deserved the name of Breton. The warning of Brizeux was inspired with fatal truth:

O Dieu qui nous créas ou guerriers ou poètes,  
Sur la côte marins et pâtres dans les champs,  
Sous les vils intérêts ne courbe pas nos têtes;  
Ne fais pas des Bretons un peuple de marchands.

The men who lived beneath the shadow of Erdeven, Plouharnel, Carnac, Locmariaker were utterly subdued by the invading hosts of Julius Cæsar both by sea and land. Their descendants, reinforced by fugitives from Britain in the sixth century, were in turn crushed by the Frankish hordes of Charlemagne. A third time the whole district was depopulated by the Norman corsairs. When at last, through blood and fire, the scanty, rough, indomitable population won to freedom and to rulers of their own, it was only to be plunged anew into the horrors of a civil war, more hideous because more intimate than any previous cataclysm. Bound at last to her step-mother, France, Brittany retained her character of dour resistance throughout the following centuries. By the Rohans she was led for a short time into a Protestantism that was bitterly avenged. By the Royalists she was persuaded into the hopeless struggle against the Revolutionary army which ended in the massacres of Vannes and Auray at the end of the eighteenth century. It is enough to have soaked any soil with blood for ever; but the grey granite of Brittany shows no stain, and it has entered into the Bretons' hearts. Bertrand du Guesclin, Olivier de Clisson—they are the types of the resistance, the stubbornness, the almost mystical endurance of their Celtic home. What they were as material forces, that were Abelard and Descartes—Bretons too—in the intellectual world. It is as if that perpetual war between land and sea, which has surrounded every Breton from his birth, had taught him that the only price of life was sorrow, the only hope of liberty lay in resistance, the only chance of happiness was isolation:

Quand la trombe aux vagues s'appuie  
Quand l'orage, l'horreur, la pluie,  
Que tordent les brises d'hiver,  
Répandent avec des huées  
Toutes les larmes des nuées  
Sur tous les sanglots de la mer.

The Castle of Josselin sums up the contrasting elements of the Breton character, both in its history and its architecture. During the drive of rather less than ten miles from Ploermel you pass the scene of one of the most famous exploits of chivalry, the combat of the thirty English against thirty French which will be told hereafter; and it was to the lofty towers which rise so proudly in their strength above the river Oust that the English wounded were taken after the battle. "Ou Guerriers ou Poètes. . . ." The fighting side of the castle fronts you as you come. Within it is the poet's dream. It might be Bertrand du Guesclin with Tiphaine la Fée behind him. It is Marguerite de Rohan's beauty protected by Olivier de Clisson's strength. Their statues lie side by side within the church of Notre Dame du Roncier. Their bodies were scattered by the furies of the Religious Wars. But in death they were not divided, and if his strong soul guards the towers that rise to-day above the river, her gentler spirit hovers still among the lace-like tracery of the windows on the inner court.

I must say something of the building before I tell the story of its occupants. In Josselin you may see a very exquisite example of that transition from the fortress to the country house which is characteristic of the later fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth. In Mont St. Michel the fortress stands confessed. In Vaux le Vicomte the other extreme is equally visible, for it is a pleasure and no more; all thought of military defence is frankly





113.—JOSSELIN FROM THE GARDEN.



given up. Josselin, like Loches, shows the beginning of that great change in human habitations which marked the gradual pacification of France after the Hundred Years' War, and the new ideals of larger life which the Renaissance brought to outworn Gothic systems. It is natural that these social changes should be more marked in civil than in religious edifices, for the extraordinary outburst of activity which inspired the thirteenth century builders had filled Europe with churches, and had begun cathedrals which were so vast in the dream of their conception that their mere completion often lasted into the fifteenth century, and the sound of the hammer has been scarcely stilled within them from their beginning until now. They were the result of a sudden realisation by the people that their house was the house of God. Their achievement was only possible owing to conditions which were passing away even before the art that reflected them had been abandoned. The men who built them lived in hovels and mean streets, and found their only refreshment from a life of noisome darkness and repellent poverty in the glorious fanes that rose to heaven and sanctified at last the labours of their hands by gathering up into one glorious whole the aspirations, the rough records, the very human joys and sins and sorrows of a population struggling to be free. Beside these temples of a very democratic art, an art as free from the fetters of the feudal seigneur as from the hierarchic pedantry of Byzantine priesthood, there stood, grim and apart, the donjon keeps of the great barons, whose homes and hearths were guarded by no power but the sword, whose strength of wall and buttress was sometimes the sole material salvation of the citizens around them. The château fort was as often the centre and mainspring of a French town as was the church. Often, too, it was yet older, inheriting from Frank and Visigoth and Roman the same hilltop that ancestral Celtic warriors had held in prehistoric wars. It was, therefore, impossible to weaken the fortress of the seigneur by any effeminate considerations for beauty until the main dangers, both to himself and to his community, had to a large extent passed away; and this relief did not come until the Gothic architecture that produced the great churches and cathedrals had reached the limit of expansion possible to its vitality; and this is why there is more of what is called Renaissance feeling in the best French châteaux than in the best French churches.

It must not be imagined that I disparage Gothic work, or unduly praise Renaissance principles. Far from it. Each is the perfect expression of the time which gave it birth, and it would be folly to ask of any age a product that was alien to its life and spirit. But if the greatest Gothic remains something for our wonder and delight, it is also—alas!—something that will not remain for very much longer and that can never be reproduced. Its most fervent admirers—and among them I may count myself—cannot but realise that the extraordinary school of pointed architecture, of oblong vaults, of soaring arches, glorious as it is, was but a local expression of development in constructive art—a development of magnificent beauty that was bound to fade. When the French captains had come back across the Alps, they brought with them the spell of that more ancient, that more deeply rooted magic which had already inspired the *Maison Carrée* and the Amphitheatre of Nîmes. "The workmen of Paris and the workmen of Athens joined hands, united by the genius of Italy."

Yet I must also make it clear that the national instinct for orderliness and proportion which is one of the strongest characteristics of the French artist had kept him balanced and temperate at heart even when his hand seemed to revel in the most fantastic inspirations of the Gothic genius. Italy had been known, and even visited, by French designers before the wars of Charles VIII. The best of them had begun to realise, and to put in practice, the vital principles of classical workmanship far earlier. The centralisation of the monarchy under Louis XI, and the consequent formation—by slow degrees—of a centre of art and luxury at the Court, assisted the more precise formulation of these ideas among the few. The men who had fought and loved through all the plain of Lombardy came back to France and spread their knowledge broadcast among the many. The campaigns of Louis XII and Francis I completed the process of emancipation.

It may seem strange that after speaking of Gothic art as essentially democratic, I should now use the phrase of "emancipation" from its influence. I do so because the end of the Gothic movement was very different from its beginning, and naturally so, for the ardent pioneers of the new school of pointed architecture were quite unable to foresee that conditions exactly



suitable to their own needs and surroundings would not be suitable to the life of two centuries later, and would inevitably produce the causes of decay. The men who force a plant to sudden flower in tropical conditions cannot expect to see the growth continue when their furnaces are cold. The guilds of workmen, for example, were a splendid solution of the labour problems that evoked them. But they led finally to the subjection of that very individual craftsman whom they were framed to emancipate, because they involved a specialisation that narrowed and restricted effort, and eventually made art either entirely barren or grotesquely extravagant and eccentric. Nor

was the touch of asceticism that is ever insistent in Gothic workmanship likely to be fruitful for long in its varied artistic manifestations. At any rate, it was not so rich in promise as that doctrine of the Humanists which demanded free and full realisation for every human faculty. It was but natural that this doctrine should lead at first to exaggeration, to the more luxurious vices, to a general sensualism. But the true ideals of the Renaissance were as exalted as those of mediævalism, though their aims were different; for the Renaissance taught not the realisation only, but the harmonious perfection of every manifestation of the mind and body.

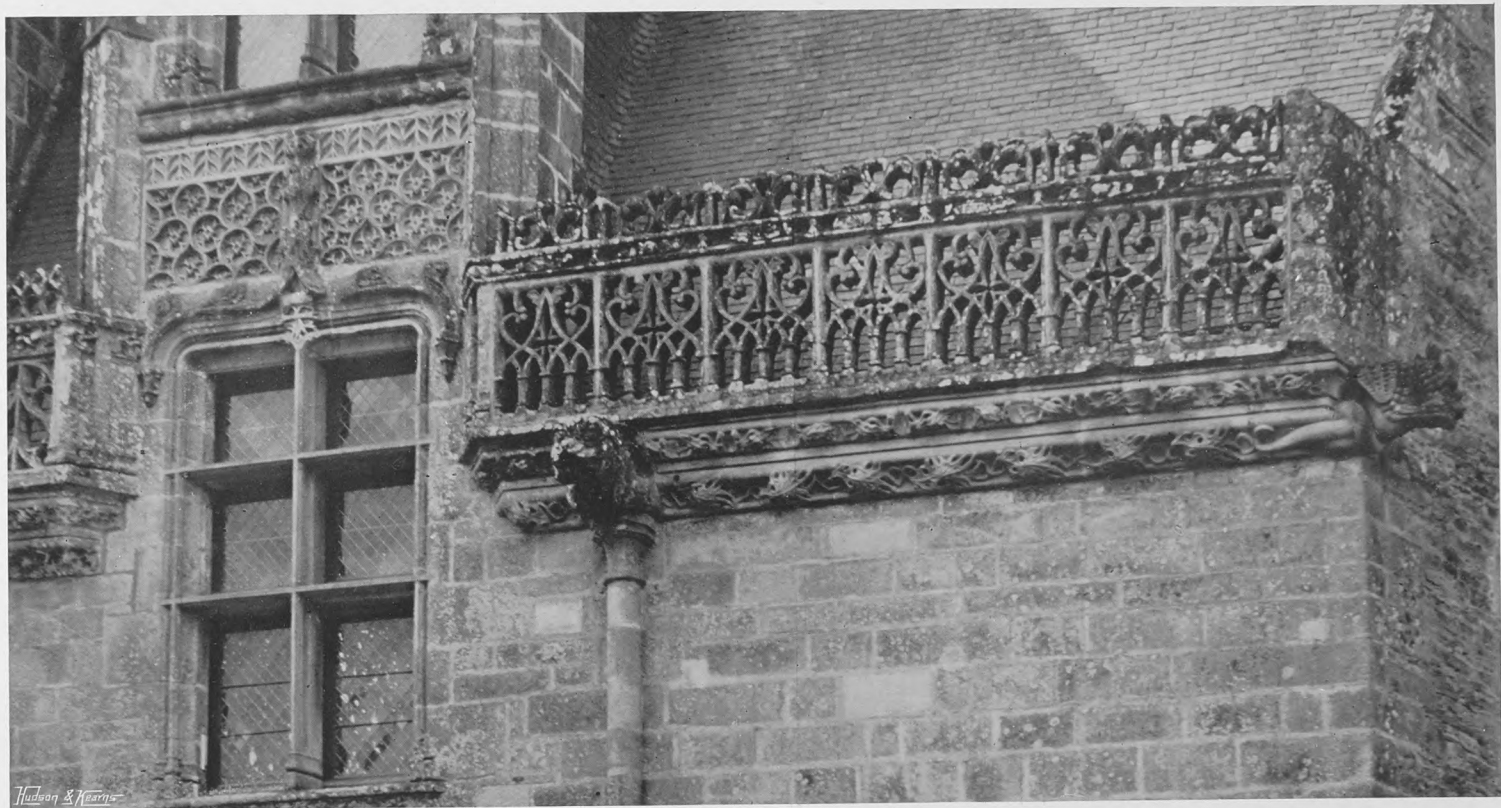
By degrees men understood that whereas the detail of Gothic work is what strikes the casual observer very strongly, as it probably most pleased the workman who was carrying out the architect's main lines after his own fashion, it is, on the other hand, the detail of Renaissance work which is the last thing you see, the final pleasure which your mind receives, the last and noblest tribute to the architect's consummate skill. Look at the Parthenon, for instance. At first you note no single detail of handicraft, for the exquisite proportions of the whole glow on your sight like the sunset on a summer sea. But when that first and great appreciation has worked its will upon you, go nearer and see of what elements its subtle beauty is composed.



114.—NORTH-EAST CORNER.



They will take some seeking, for they are elusive as the rays of slanting splendour upon the cloud bank or the evening waves; and they are as worthy of your praise. In the Parthenon no two neighbouring capitals correspond in size, diameters of columns are unequal, the fluting of each column is delicately varied and modulated, the intercolumnar spaces are irregular, the metopes are of varying width, all the columns lean slightly towards the centre of the building, the main horizontal lines of construction are in curves which rise in vertical planes to the centre of each side, and these curves are not parallel. The beauty of quite simple and apparently monotonous passages of ornament depends on variations of line and curve so subtly determined in relation to their position that they could never be understood—they certainly could never have been expressed in marble—unless the mind that made them first or saw them afterwards had been intensely appreciative of their meaning. Even the most subordinate parts of Greek work can only have been done by a man who was a great deal more than a mere machine, by a man who understood not only his own task, but its relation to the perfect whole. This, then, was the independent creative energy, based on wider knowledge, which the Renaissance gave the workman in the place of that specialisation of the trade guilds into which the later Gothic had been debased; and this was the rise of artistic ideals which supplanted the mediæval workman's

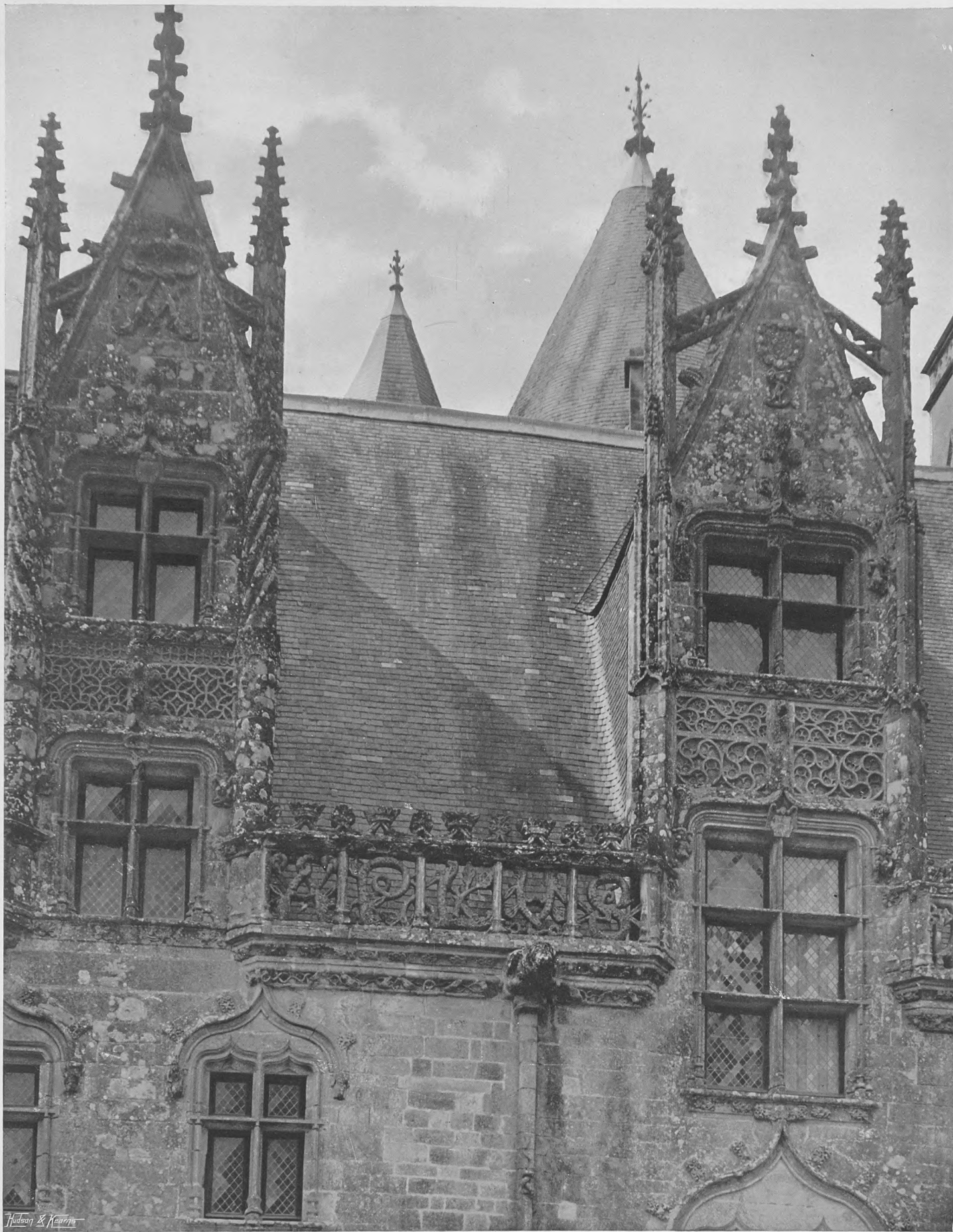


115.—FRETTED STONEWORK.

triumph over the designing artist. The master-masons of the old cathedrals had had their day as soon as the masons tried to be masters, in their turn, without the right equipment for their task.

As might have been expected, the joy of this new ideal of subordinated classical ornament, delicately traced in low relief, at first led to excesses. Foreign accessories were transferred to outlines which were in no degree modified to receive them. The passion for the nude, which is a strong characteristic of the ideals which classical art implies, became at first mere sensualism, with the shock of the first revulsion from the shrouded shapes of Mediævalism and its monstrous crowds of devils and grotesques. But there were men in France who had been silently preparing for the change, and by them was the first true French Renaissance brought about which extended from the middle of the fifteenth century until Francis I almost broke down the national art of France by over-emphasising foreign influences, and by bringing over Italians who were either past their prime or never in the front rank of their brotherhood. Such men as Michel Columbe, the Breton, trained at Dijon and developed in Touraine, were French at heart, but great enough to absorb all that was best from outside into the national expression of their art. One of his greatest works is close to Josselin, the magnificent tomb of Francis,





116.—DETAILS OF WINDOWS.



Duke of Brittany, in the Cathedral of Nantes. His exquisite Renaissance detail is visible again in the tomb of Philibert of Savoy, designed when he was eighty. We may think of him as the last of the great master-masons. After them came the Parisians—Bullant, Lescot, De l'Orme ; after Chenonceaux and Chambord come Anet and the Louvre, and so the school works on towards the stateliness of Mansard and the pompous dignity of Vaux le Vicomte. At Blois you shall see the full development all on one spot : the rough-hewn, round donjon of the Gothic feudalism, the delicate change from French Gothic to true French Renaissance, the insistent beauty of Italian ornament and detail, the ordered splendour of the wing of Gaston d'Orléans. At Josselin it is the first two only I shall show you.

Looked at from across the stream of Oust, the castle has so many typical aspects of the Gothic fortress that it is only by an after-thought you realise the meaning of those dormer windows breaking the roof line above the row of machicolated battlements. The three great towers plunge strongly down towards the stream, based firmly on the sturdy rock that has been rough-hewn to receive their mighty cylindrical foundations. The walk across the bridge and through the overhanging houses of the town increases the feeling of Gothic age, which is yet again emphasised as you pass the porch of Notre Dame du Roncier. There is a great gate-tower at the entrance to the castle court, and yet another, standing alone in the distance, which mark the boundaries of the ancient fortress ; and then comes change. Clisson has had his way ; 'tis Marguerite de Rohan greets you on the other side.

The machicolated battlements have become an exquisite balustrade, on which the Rohan device, A PLUS, is carved among the foliage beneath the crowns and marguerites and fleurs-de-lys. The windows are delicately fretted over with carving in low relief ; they open wide to receive the light. The narrow slit, fit for an archer's bow, has broadened into the gracious croisée, meet for a hostess who can face the sunshine unafraid. The Gothic pinnacle and trefoil are there, above the main door, upon each side of the windows. But a new spirit has informed the whole. These sculptured dormers are grouped in a new symmetry, their lines are ordered one above the other, their openings so placed as to give the perpendicular divisions of the main design. Within, the same simplicity of arrangement as is still seen at Langeais marks that the development has not yet attained the height of Chambord or Azay le Rideau. But the beginning of the new world is here, among the endings of the old—among those twisting serpents of scaled stone that writhe from the Gothic gargoyle, down the Renaissance wall. The façade reminds one irresistibly of the more elaborate Palais de Justice at Rouen, where the windows are so richly treated that the whole scheme seems subordinated to their perfection only. But Josselin was a less complex building. This façade as we see it was finished before 1511, and the outer walls above the river were built by Alain IX de Rohan soon after 1440. The impression of peaceful and pleasant architecture has been increased in our day because Richelieu destroyed part of the fortifications left in his time ; and the old plan of Clisson's stronghold can be traced best in the low containing walls of the upper garden, which are built along the exact outlines of Clisson's donjons and embrasures. The moat is gay with flowers now, and outside it the ground slopes still further to the trees and water and the shady paths of the home park where I sat one spring afternoon and forgot that Bretons could be melancholy.

Within the library of the Duchesse de Rohan, herself a poet and a singer of the history of Josselin, are many tokens and remembrances of the men and women who have passed beneath its walls. Here is a fragment of the dress of Marguerite de Clisson ; the hair of Blanche de Castille, mother of St. Louis ; a strip of a Venetian flag captured at Lepanto ; the cross held by a noble kinsman of the house when he was guillotined ; the robe of the Duchesse de Berry all blood-stained at the murder of her husband. And so from the thirteenth century to the nineteenth the records of the place are mingled with the records of French history. Here are the portraits of that wife of Alain de Rohan who was daughter of the first Francis, Duke of Brittany, and of Jeanne de Navarre ; of Marguerite de Rohan, who married the Comte d'Angoulême and became grandmother to " François qui est tout français," the King of France. In the great hall is Frémiet's splendid statue of the Constable, with Clisson's proud motto, " Pour ce qui me plet." Round the walls are the escutcheons of those royal and princely houses into which the Rohans have from time to time been allied by marriage. England,





117.—SOUTH TOWER, RIVER AND VILLAGE FROM TERRACE WALLS.



Scotland and France are there, with Flanders, Lorraine and Luxembourg, with Brittany and Navarre and Parthenay, with the great houses of Sully and of Uzès.

In the church of Notre Dame du Roncier, above the tomb of Clisson and his wife, are the effigies in stained glass of Alain IX de Rohan (1457), of Marie de Lorraine (1455), of Marguerite de Bretagne (1498), of Jehan de Rohan (1516), and of Pierre de Rohan (1513), Marshal of France, of whom something more must be said later.

The earliest châtelain of Josselin was Cuethnos, Vicomte de Porhoet, son of the Comte de Rennes in 1026, and the place took its name in 1064 from Josselin his second son. The Château de Rohan is some thirty miles away, further north-west along the stream of Oust that laves the walls of Josselin, and it was built by Alain, third son of the first Eudo, Comte de Porhoet, in 1128. Taken and burnt by the Earl of Southampton in 1345, it was rebuilt in the fifteenth century, but is now in ruins. It was no longer wanted after the Rohans came to Josselin and established themselves in the inheritance of Clisson. But the name of Rohan appears at Josselin even before that, when Geoffrey, nephew of that first Josselin already mentioned, called himself Rohan in 1110. Soon afterwards the place was held by Eudes, Duke of Brittany, and in 1169 was taken and burnt by Henry II of England. It then passed to the great family of the Lusignans, and by Guy de Lusignan was bequeathed with the County of Porhoet to the King of France, Philippe le Bel. By King Jean this inheritance was handed to Charles de Valois, Comte d'Alençon, who was killed at Crécy; and from his descendant, Pierre d'Alençon, Porhoet and Josselin were sold in 1370 to the rich and powerful Olivier de Clisson, Constable of France, and husband of Marguerite de Rohan.

But the Combat of the Thirty, one of the greatest episodes in the history of this district, occurred before Clisson ever came to Josselin as its lord; and it is perhaps the most characteristic incident in all that terrible war of succession which went on in Brittany while the Hundred Years' War was desolating France. I must explain as briefly as may be why this double plague fell with such terrible severity upon the Morbihan.

It has been already hinted that the Bretons were invariably fighting somebody. When they were not warring with France or England, when they were not hired as the mercenaries of some other cause, they fought with redoubled bitterness among themselves. The grim catalogue of death is only lightened now and then by some such chivalrous feat as roused the joy of Froissart. "Entrerons," he says, "en la grande matière et histoire de Bretagne, qui grandement renlumine ce livre pour les beaux faits d'armes qui y sont ramentués." I shall follow him pretty closely in what concerns Josselin at this time.

The trouble began, in 1341, with the death of John III Duke of Brittany, who left no direct issue. His niece, Jeanne, daughter of his dead brother, Guy de Penthievre, had married Charles de Blois, who was of the Royal blood of France through his mother, the French King's sister. Guy was the son, as John had been, of Arthur II Duke of Brittany and his first wife, Marie de Limoges. By a second wife, Yolande de Dreux, Duke Arthur had had issue, a son, John of Montfort, who married the sister of Earl Lewis of Flanders. Here, as will be seen, were the elements of a very pretty quarrel. The earliest of the claimants, John of Montfort, was backed by "Bretagne Bretonnante," and represented the very rights of inheritance which Philip VI of France maintained by insisting upon the Gallic law that disallowed the claims of women. Yet it was France which bitterly opposed him and supported the wife of Charles de Blois and the nobility of "Bretagne française." So Montfort turned to England, to the King whose whole energies were given to enforcing a claim to the French throne based on that very Gallic law which he so cheerfully disregarded at the request of his new friend. These incongruous inconsistencies are, however, mainly on the surface. France could not stand by and see a fief so near her borders deliberately taken from a nephew of her King. England could not afford to overlook so brilliant an opportunity for attacking the frontiers of her hereditary foe. There was the personal question of the house of Montfort too.

Their destiny has been a singular one in history. One of the greatest of their line was that terrible Simon de Montfort who led the Albigensian Crusaders to drench the South in blood. His fourth son, another Simon, inherited the Earldom of Leicester, married the sister of the English King and was strong enough on both sides of the Channel to be able to refuse the





118.—JOSSELIN FROM THE RIVER.



Regency of France offered to him during the absence of St. Louis. As his father had led the Church against the heretics of France, so he led the Commons and the people of England against the nobles and the King. He was slain, fighting desperately at Evesham, by the military skill he had himself taught English Edward; and his Parliament of 1265 is in all essentials the English Parliament of to-day. It was a third of this great name, though not so great as either of these predecessors, who led an English and a Breton army against the French in the war that began in 1342.

As soon as he knew of the Duke's death the Earl of Montfort hastened to Nantes with his wife Jeanne, "who had the courage of a man and the heart of a lion," says Froissart. He took Brest, Rennes and Hennebon, and then went to do homage for his duchy to the King of England at Windsor. This naturally led to a summons to the Court at Paris, which Montfort obeyed, though he thought it discreet to get away again to Nantes as secretly and as swiftly as might be. The Duchy was then adjudged "by contumacy and default" to Charles of Blois by the peers and barons of the Parliament of Paris, including the Vicomte de Rohan. Soon afterwards the French army inflicted a severe defeat outside Nantes on Montfort's forces in 1341, commanded by Sir Hervé de Léon, a member of a family soon to be allied with the Rohans, and still giving the title of Prince de Léon to the eldest son of the house. The result was that Montfort himself was taken prisoner and sent to the Louvre in Paris, and he died at Hennebon four years later, after one more fruitless effort to maintain his cause.

But his dauntless Countess carried on the fight with renewed energy, and went round to all her towns and fortresses with her young son, John, the King of England's ward, rousing the loyalty of the citizens and soldiers to her banner. When the French attacked her in Hennebon, she rode through the streets of the town and persuaded the women to cut short their kirtles and stand on the ramparts with the men. Herself, in full armour on a war-horse, she led three hundred knights out of a postern gate, fell on the French camp and set fire to it, escaping safely to Brest before her enemies recovered from their confusion. Sir Hervé de Léon, now on the French side, stayed in the besieging lines before Hennebon, while the Vicomte de Rohan joined the main body of the French forces, which moved off to the attack of Auray.

At the very last minute Hennebon, to which the Countess had returned, was saved by the fleet from England under Sir Walter Manny, who was kissed and welcomed by its brave defender "with a most cheerful countenance like a noble and valiant dame." The thought of the English archers was too much for the French, and they raised the siege the next day. So the struggle went on with varying fortunes until a temporary truce was called, and the Countess went to England with her son.

The horrors of the Black Death fell upon Europe from 1347 to 1349, and the Morbihan, desolated and impoverished by so much warfare, was yet again depopulated. Truce or no truce, Brittany seemed ever scourged by mediæval demons. But no tribulations could lessen the courage of her sons, as was well seen in that glorious fight of March 27th, during the fourth week of Lent, in 1351, on the spot now marked by a granite obelisk that has replaced the Oak of Mivoie, half way from Ploermel to Josselin. I translate from Froissart:

In that year Sir Robert de Beaumanoir held Josselin for France and Charles de Blois, with a garrison composed of many of his own men, and many hireling soldiers; and it befell on a day that he came before the town and castle of Ploermel, whereof the Englishman Sir Richard Bamborough was captain with a garrison of English, Germans and Bretons for the Countess of Montfort; and Sir Robert with his men pressed eagerly past the barriers and looked for those that were within to issue forth, but none came out. So when he saw this he went nearer still beneath the walls and summoned the captain to a parley. Then Bamborough came out, and each gave the other loyal greeting and assurance; and Sir Robert spoke and said:

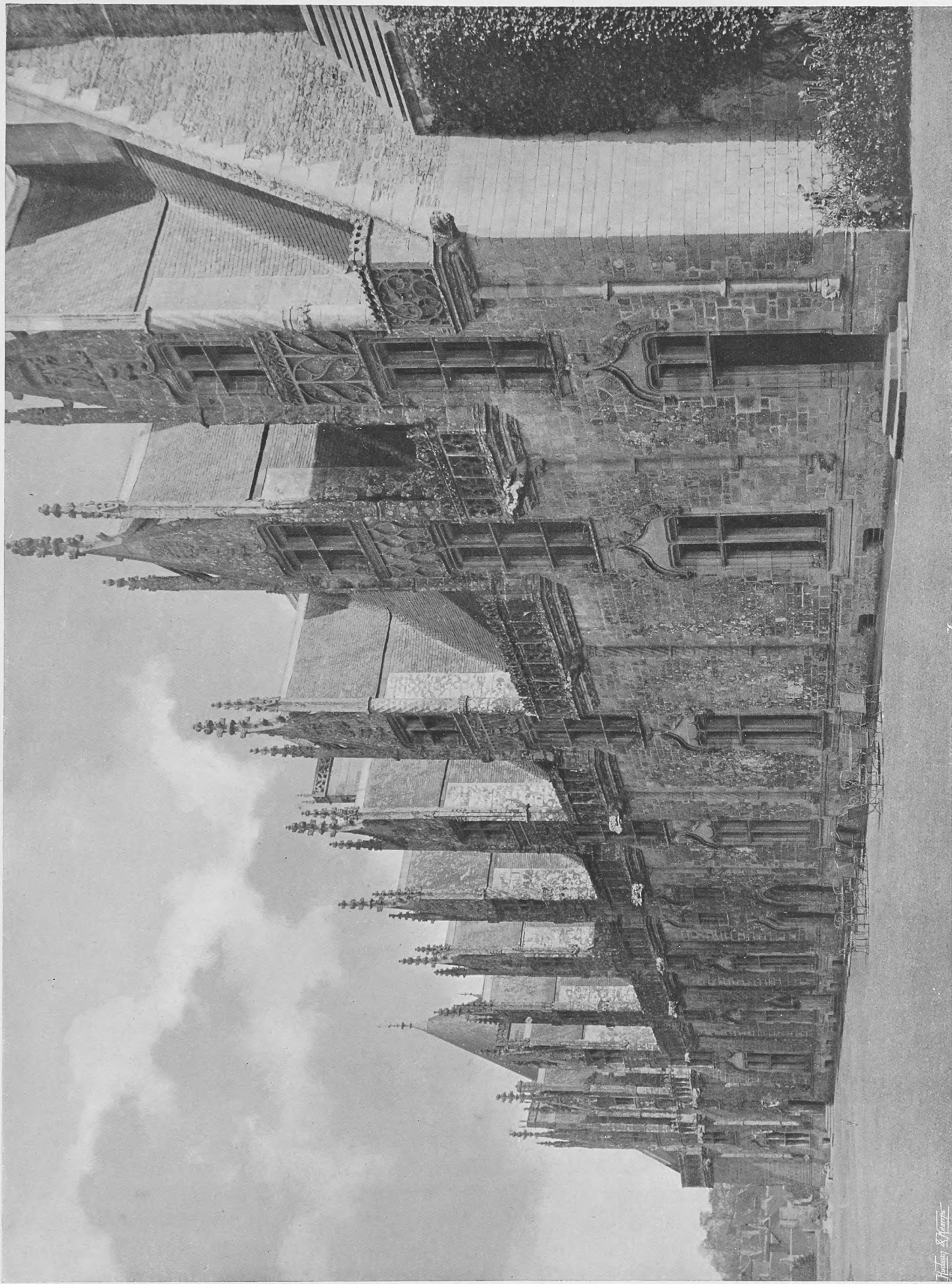
"Bamborough, have you no men-at-arms within there, yourself or some other, two or three, who will joust at sword and lance with two or three of us for the love of their ladies?" Then Bamborough answered him that their ladies would in no wise desire so ill an end for them as but one joust, seeing that this was an adventure very swiftly finished, and that such deeds savoured rather of headstrong foolishness than of honour or esteem.

"But," said he, "I will tell you what we will do if it pleases you. Take a score or thirty of the men of your garrison, and I will choose as many of mine, and let us fare forth to some field meet for the combat where none can hinder us or turn us from our purpose. And let us lay a most strict oath upon our other comrades, upon either side, and upon all beholders, that no help or rescue shall be given us in the fight; so shall we do a deed of which the times to come shall speak, in hall and palace and all places of the world. And let them win honour and fortune to whom Heaven shall have appointed it."

"By my troth," said Messire Beaumanoir, "I consent to you, and right loyal words you speak. So be you thirty, and we will be thirty, too, and on that I pledge you my word."

"So pledge I mine," said Bamborough, "for so shall a man win far more honour than at jousting only."





119.—THE FACADE OF JOSSELIN.



Thus they confirmed and settled this business between them, and fixed their meeting for the morning of the fourth day thereafter, and in the meanwhile each captain chose his thirty champions as seemed good to him, and all the sixty made great store of armour, and looked well to their harness and their weapons.

When the day fixed was come Bamborough's thirty men heard mass, and armed themselves and fared to the appointed place, and alighted all of them from off their horses, and strictly forbade all those who had gathered to look on that they should lift a hand in the matter, either to aid the one side or to harm the other; and so did the thirty men of Beaumanoir. Some long time then did the thirty English stand waiting for the thirty French; but when the French were come they alighted down on foot as well and gave the orders that had been agreed upon. Five of them, however, remained on horseback at the entry to that place, and five-and-twenty stood up on foot against the English. So when they were face to face they gave each other greeting and talked together a little all the sixty in courteous agreement, and thereafter drew asunder to each side, and made the onlookers and the partisans of each stand well back from the field of combat. Then on a sign from one of them they speedily rushed together to the onset and fought very mightily in a great heap together, and rescued each other bravely whensoever any soldier fell.

Right soon after the fight was joined, one of the French was slain; but the others slacked not the combat one whit for him, but stood to it right valiantly and loyally on both sides, yea in so much that each might have been a Roland or an Oliver. Who held himself the best or who fought best, I cannot soothly tell, for never thereafter was one held to have done better than his comrades; but they fought so far forth that at last all lost their breath and had no strength or power left.

So since cease and rest they must, they stayed their hands by mutual agreement, each moving to his own side, and called a truce until such time as they had reposed themselves; and the first man ready should summon the rest. Four French and two Englishmen lay dead, and the others of each side lay long and rested. Some of them drank wine which had been brought in bottles for them, and others did up their harness where it was unjointed or bound up their wounds.

When they had thus refreshed themselves, the first who rose up made signal to the others, and the battle began again as hard as ever, and lasted long and long. They used short swords of Bordeaux steel, strong, straight and sharp; and long swords; and daggers; and some fought with axes; and they smote and dinged each other mightily. Some there were who wrestled in bodyholds and so smote their enemy without sparing. Well may you ween that many a feat of arms was bravely shown that day by men of both nations fighting body to body and hand to hand. A hundred years before had never so great a deed been done as this was.

So after they had fought like honest champions and had right loyally sustained themselves throughout this second bout, the English in the end began to have the worst of it, for one or two of the French, who, as I told you before, had stayed on horseback, rode right upon the English and broke them into very sad disorder, insomuch that Bamborough, their captain, was slain forthright, with eight others of his men. So the remainder gave themselves up prisoners when they saw that no hope or rescue was to be looked for, since run away they ought not and they could not. Then Messire Robert, and those of his comrades who were left alive, took those Englishmen and led them prisoners to Josselin, and gave them to ransom very courteously when they had healed them of their wounds, for there was none there that was not wounded, whether of the French or of the English.

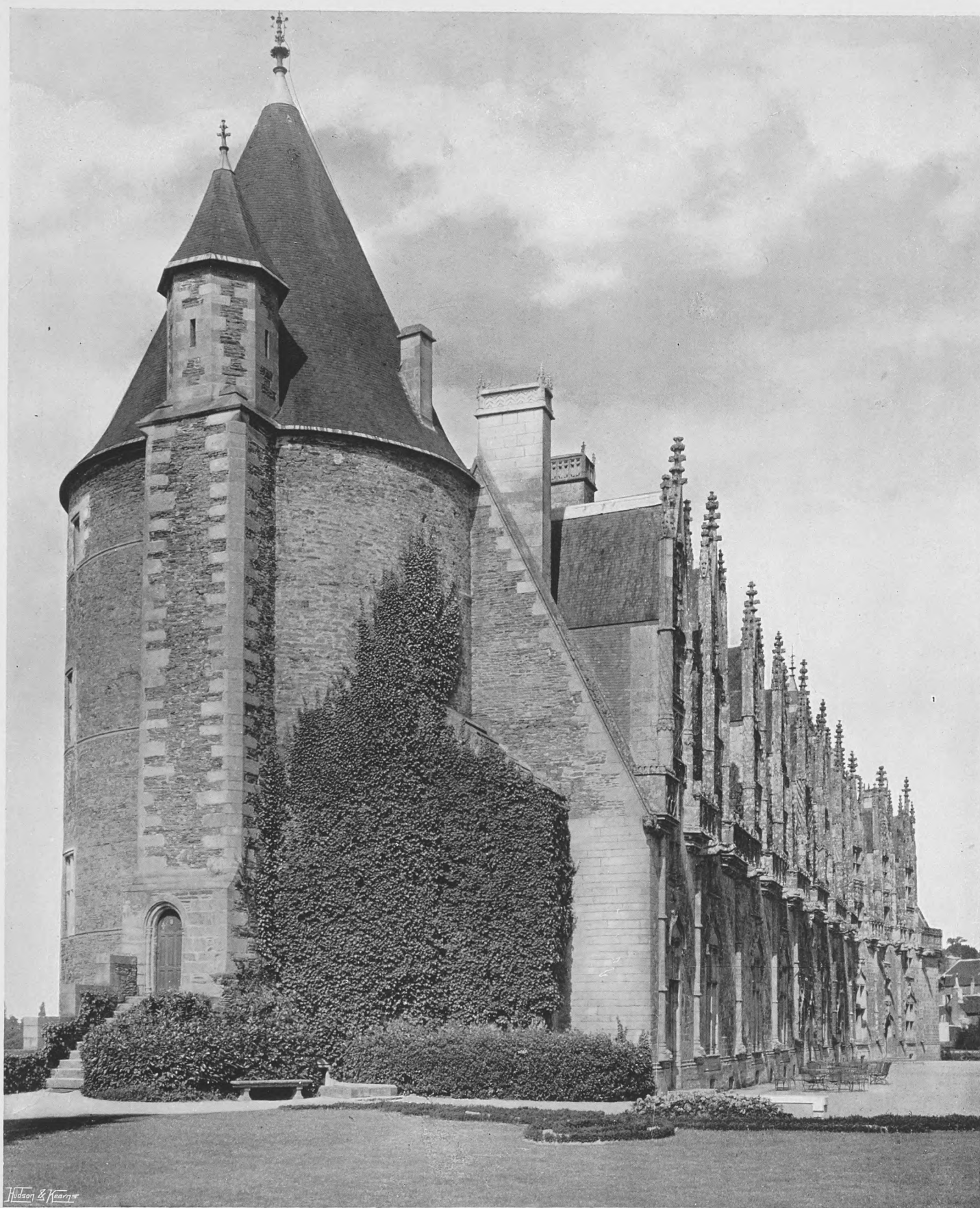
The names of all these sturdy fighters have been preserved in poems of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; but Froissart specially mentions Yvain Charuelz, a Breton knight, whom he saw at the King of France's table, "with his face still so scarred and hacked about that he showed how hard the fight had been." Enguérand de l'Edin of Picardy was another; and Hugh of Rancevaux was a squire who had done valiantly. But the most terrible tale of all is that of Geoffrey Dubois, who saw the châtelain of Josselin well-nigh fainting with thirst beneath an oak tree, and roused him with the brutal words: "Drink your blood and come back." The motto "*Bois ton Sang Beaumanoir*" went with his escutcheon ever afterwards.

War broke out again after peace had been signed, and the French King's campaign was illustrated by another Breton hero, one of the greatest of them all, Bertrand du Guesclin of Dinan, who had won his spurs before Melun and fought for France since 1357. He whose strength and courage have become legendary was on the showing of his own chroniclers short, black-avised and snub-nosed, with green eyes, huge shoulders and long arms. His wife, Tiphaine la Fée, was a "wise woman," who had power over all the beasts of the field; and the fowls of air darkened the sky as they flew in mourning squadrons to her funeral. After her death he married Guyonne de Laval, and when his own hour came the English garrison of Randon laid the keys of their citadel upon his coffin. A rude, rough soldier, as ready to win by fraud as by force, he was beloved by his troops and by the King, and was ransomed again and again out of the hands of the enemy. His is the stubborn skull that heads the Breton battering-ram in the fighting of the next few years round Josselin.

Both the French King and Jean de Montfort, son of the brave Countess, were intent, in 1364, on seizing the good town of Auray. For the French fought Charles de Blois, Bertrand du Guesclin, who gave his charge in Normandy to Boucicault, the Vicomte de Rohan, the Sieur of Léon and many more, "all of the right sort," says Froissart, "and good men at arms." For Montfort came Sir John Chandos, having obtained permission from the Black Prince, with Sir Robert Knollys, Olivier de Clisson, Sir Eustace d'Ambreticourt, Sir Matthew Gurney, Sir Richard Taunton, Sir John Bouchier, Sir Richard Burleigh and Sir Hugh Calverley, who was only prevailed on by Chandos at the last moment to take the rearguard of five hundred men, which eventually turned the fortunes of the day. Beaumanoir acted as peacemaker before the



armies closed, which would be curious hearing if we did not know he was a prisoner under parole not to bear arms. Like other peacemakers at Poitiers, he seems, however, to have been unable to resist joining in the fray when once it had begun. The French "were in such close order," says the chronicle, "that one could scarcely throw an apple among them without its



120.—A PERSPECTIVE VIEW FROM THE SOUTH.

falling on a helmet or a lance"; and at first the Breton and English side began to waver; but Sir Hugh Calverley's rearguard was ever on the watch, and promptly supported any company that seemed in peril. Olivier de Clisson made great play with his battle-axe and never left the field, although he lost his eye in the thick of the *melée*. After a hard fight Bertrand Du Guesclin



was taken prisoner, and Charles de Blois was slain "facing his enemies," among a crowd of dead men who had fallen round his banner. The Sieur de Léon was killed, and the Vicomte de Rohan taken prisoner, with many another of the chivalry of France. The body of Charles of Blois was borne away for burial to Guingamp, and with his death the long quarrel for the inheritance seemed over. Four years afterwards the noble Chandos was slain in a skirmish on French soil. Du Guesclin was ransomed, and went off to the wars again in Spain. When next he appeared in Brittany, Clisson was fighting on his side for France and the Comtesse de Penthièvre against Montfort and the English. Montfort never forgave Clisson for the change, and they were bitter enemies for many years.

Du Guesclin signalised his appointment as Constable of France by making use of Clisson's help to beat Sir Robert Knollys near Le Mans, and by now Brittany was going hard against Duke Montfort and his English friends, for such a four as Du Guesclin, Laval, Clisson, with his fortresses of Josselin, Montagu and Montcontour, and Rohan with his castles at Caire and Linguighant, were hard to beat. They swooped down on the unhappy Morbihan, and took Rennes, Dinan, Vannes, Hennebon and the Duke's own castle of Suscinio, of which the ruins only remain. With difficulty was Knollys himself rescued by Lord Salisbury and his sailors, and the Duke escaped to England, leaving his Duchess still shut up in Auray. So King Edward sent him back again with the Earls of Cambridge and of March, and many other English captains, who came against the frontiers guarded by Beaumanoir and Rohan. But nothing came of it save the rescue of the Duchess, who went back to England with her husband.

After Du Guesclin's death at Chateauneuf le Randon, Olivier de Clisson was made Constable of France, and the war of succession against the Duke of Brittany dragged on. After one failure by shipwreck, another English expedition was sent to his help under the Earl of Buckingham in 1380, which proved no more successful, for neither Clisson nor Rohan would have part or lot with the invaders, who at one time had to cross the river Oust quite close to Josselin, while the Duke waited at Suscinio, unable to give any help. At last the Vicomte de Rohan pointed out that no Duke of Brittany could ever force his claim upon the country by the help of English lances, and he went with Laval and two others as emissaries of peace to Paris. Meanwhile Buckingham's army was in winter quarters close to Vannes, Hennebon, Quimperlé and Quimpercorentin, when Sir Barrois des Barres, Sir Hoyau d'Araines and other knights and squires came to Château Josselin, seven leagues from Vannes, where the Comte de la Marche was visiting the Constable, and a pretty little series of single combats was immediately arranged to pass the time. The Earl of Buckingham begged to see the sport as well, so to please him the lists were moved to Vannes. The lord of Vertain wounded the lord of Ponsanges very sorely. Sir John d'Ambreticourt and Sir Tristan de la Jaille fought without scathe. Then came the bout between a squire of Savoy, called the bastard Clarins, and Edward Beauchamp, son of Sir Robert Beauchamp. The Englishman proved too weak for the encounter, whereon Jankin Finchley took his place and stood to it valiantly. After this Sir John de Chatelmorant had a quarrel to settle with Jankin Clinton, squire of honour to the Duke of Buckingham; but again the Englishman proved too weak, and Sir William Farrington, who took his place, was so unfortunate as by mistake to strike the Frenchman a foul blow through the thigh, owing to slipping just as he struck. Chatelmorant was carried back to Josselin, where he was hardly nursed back to life after his grievous wound.

When Buckingham's army broke up, part of his forces returned to Cherbourg by land, and Sir John Harleston, Sir Evan Fitzwarren, Sir William Clinton and Sir John Burley stopped on their way at Josselin, and were warmly welcomed "as brother-soldiers," says Froissart, "who always see each other with pleasure, particularly the French and English." So John Boucmel, a French squire in the service of the Count de la Marche, joyfully seized the opportunity to settle some little difficulties respecting a challenge to a tilting match with an English squire named Nicholas Clifford, whom he met at the village inn of Josselin, where the English knights were dining. So when they came up to the castle to wait on the Constable after dinner, Clisson "received them very amicably, and then said—'I put you all under arrest and forbid you to depart hence this day: to-morrow morning, after mass, you shall witness the combat between your squire and ours, and then you shall dine with me. Dinner over, you shall set out and I

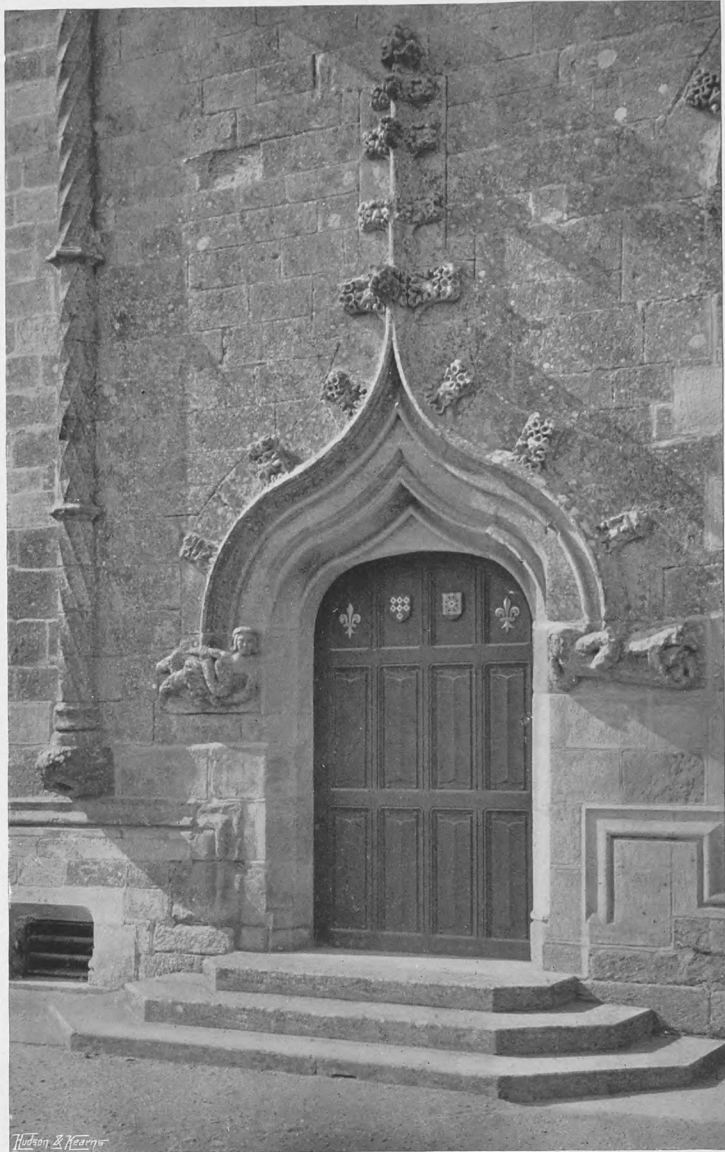




121.—TOWER AND RIVER FROM THE ASCENT.



will give you good guides to conduct you to Cherbourg.' " So the squires fought the next day, and Nicholas Clifford revenged the English for their former mishaps, for his spear struck the Frenchman on the upper part of the breastplate, slipped off and pierced the mail round his neck, and cut his jugular vein. The Count de la Marche most tenderly bewailed his squire,



122.—A DOORWAY.

but Clisson knew "that such things were to be expected in similar combats," and led the whole company in to dinner. Directly afterwards that good knight Sir Barrois des Barres escorted the English straight from Josselin to Pontorson and Mont St. Michel, whence they took ship home.

When next an English Governor of Cherbourg was being entertained at Josselin, Clisson had a deeper stroke of policy in hand. Sir John Charlton was asked at dinner, by one of Clisson's squires, Jean Roland, to do him a great favour. "From friendship to the Constable," replied Sir John, "I wish it may cost me something. What is it you wish me to do?" "Sir," replied he, "that I may have your passport to go to England to my master John of Brittany."

Now this "John of Brittany" was the title given to the son of Charles of Blois who fell at Auray fighting for his wife's claims on the Duchy, and leaving his sons as hostages in England. The younger died, but John, the elder, remained perforce, for it was no one's particular business to pay the ransom for him. All this came to the knowledge of Clisson while Buckingham's English soldiers were at Josselin. The Constable shrewdly determined to turn it to his own advantage. Clisson was a man of great wealth. He possessed the equivalent of about a million sterling when

his enemies tried to assassinate him in Paris. And he determined to ransom John of Brittany and marry him to one of his daughters, as a Rohan was married to the other. All came off as he planned, and the rage of Montfort you may easily imagine at the reappearance of a possible claimant to the Duchy by the agency of his old enemy the Constable. Twice Montfort tried to take revenge, the first time after so dastardly fashion that even the loyalty to England which he made his pretext can never excuse him; the second was a sordid attempt at assassination by hired ruffians in Paris.

It will, perhaps, be news to those few English travellers who ever visit Josselin that they stand within the fortress-lines of a Constable of France who made every preparation to invade England in 1387. But William the Conqueror's expedition has always been difficult to reproduce, as the great Napoleon himself discovered. What Clisson might have done we shall never know; for he was foully and traitorously hindered by Montfort, Duke of Brittany. Both Clisson and his son-in-law had always refused their full allegiance to Montfort as the Duke, whatever other treaties and arrangements had been made. They never forgave his foreign sympathies, and rightly. So when he heard that Clisson was to lead an invading force of French across the Channel, Montfort determined at one stroke to ingratiate himself with his English friends and to avenge his own wrongs upon Clisson. It is a disgusting story. Montfort wrote affectionate letters to the lord of Josselin and his other knights and barons, inviting them to a friendly assembly at Vannes. In his official position the Constable invited everyone to



dine with him the day after the first dinner with the Duke, meaning to embark at Tréguier soon afterwards. Montfort drank to the health of the expedition and its leaders and invited them to ride across and look at his new castle of L'Hermine before they left Brittany. When they were near the keep, "Sir Oliver," said the rascal, "there is not a man on this side of the sea who understands masonry like you: enter, therefore, I beg of you, and examine the wall well; and if you say it is properly built it shall remain, otherwise it shall be altered." Thinking no harm, Clisson went in, and was promptly seized by the Duke's servants, bound and thrown into a dungeon, in spite of the protests of his brother-in-law, Laval, who remonstrated hotly with the Duke outside, when he saw the door shut behind the Constable. When Beaumanoir in turn

protested, he was seized and thrown into another dungeon. Like other villains of his kidney, Montfort was neither strong enough to kill his man nor brave enough to face him, and after long persuasion he accepted the castles of Broc, Josselin and Lamballe, and the town of Jugon, as Clisson's ransom, besides a large sum of money. Laval stayed at L'Hermine to watch the Duke, while Beaumanoir was released to raise the ransom. In a short time it was collected, the castles were handed over (though not, as it turned out, for long) and Clisson was set free. He galloped instantly out of Brittany and hastened to lay his just grievances before the King of France, his master.



123.—SOUTH-EAST CORNER.

Other instances of insolence and disloyalty had already inflamed the Court of Paris against the Duke of Brittany, and the appearance of a greater possibility of peace with England rendered it essential that the Breton Question should be settled. This Montfort slowly began to realise, and he returned to Clisson the castles he had so dishonourably stolen, Josselin among



them. But he still openly lamented that he had not murdered the Constable when he had had the chance ; and only in 1388 was he with difficulty persuaded to patch up a formal reconciliation with the King in Paris. For many years afterwards he was so afraid of meeting Clisson that he expressly stipulated that the Constable should never be present when he visited the King, who was extremely fond of Clisson and paid every attention to his advice. Nor was the state of affairs in any way bettered by the marriages arranged at Tours between a son of Montfort and a daughter of the King of France, and between a daughter of Montfort and the son of that " John of Brittany " who had married Clisson's daughter. It was an artful intermixture of the various families which smacks too much of a lawyer's office to be natural. It proved utterly valueless as a basis of reconciliation.

Montfort's venom only grew more bitter by delay. At length he picked out an appropriate tool, and whispered into the ears of Pierre de Craon the lie that his disgrace by the French King had been suggested by the Constable. Craon took his measures accordingly, went secretly to Paris, and filled his house with hired assassins, keeping them all carefully within his gates until the right moment came. It happened that Clisson was dining one afternoon with the King at the Hôtel de St. Pol in Paris. The Constable stayed till the last, talking to the Duke of Touraine, and rode homewards down the broad street of St. Catherine, behind some eight or ten of his servants bearing torches. He was talking with his squire about a dinner—Clisson seems ever to have loved entertaining—which he would give on the morrow to the Duke of Touraine, the lord of Coucy, the baron of Ivry and others, when suddenly some men rushed on the little company and put out the servants' torches, while a voice shouted, " Death ! Death ! Clisson, thou must die ! " " Who art thou," said Clisson, " that utterest such words ? " " I am Peter de Craon, thine enemy, whom thou hast so often angered, and now thou shalt pay for it." So the murderers fell upon him pell-mell in the dark. Froissart gives every detail of the scene. " The Constable parried the blows tolerably well with a short cutlass, not two feet long, which was all the arms he had ; but his defence would have been of no avail if God's providence had not protected him. He kept steady on horseback for some time until he was villainously struck on the back part of his head, which knocked him off his horse. In his fall he hit against the hatch of a baker's door which the man had half opened on hearing the noise ; and Sir Oliver, falling against it, burst it quite open and rolled into the shop. Those on horseback could not follow him, as the entrance was neither wide nor high enough, and besides, they did their work like cowards."

The King hurried to the spot with only two chamberlains as soon as the news was brought him, and at once sent for his own surgeons to care for the wounded man. But it takes a good deal to crack a Breton skull, and the Constable recovered. Craon escaped out of Paris ; but all his houses were seized and his goods sequestered, and the only greeting he got from the Duke of Brittany was a jeer at his stupidity in being unable to finish off the job.

It was on his journey to Brittany to avenge this insult to so high an officer of the Crown that the unhappy Charles VI went mad, and the Constable's enemies came into power ; so Clisson, finding the Dukes of Burgundy and Berry determined on his undoing, retreated from Paris to his good castle of Josselin, which he strengthened for a siege. They then condemned him on a false and wicked charge of treason as being responsible for the King's illness, deprived him of office, and banished him from France. But Montfort's exultation was short lived, for the King recovered.

Messengers who had been sent to Brittany from time to time were never able to find Clisson ; but the Dukes managed to get Philip d'Artois, Comte d'Eu, made Constable of France, on the occasion of his marriage to the young Countess Dunois, widow of Louis of Blois. But Clisson still kept his sword of office, and was " perfectly indifferent, for he felt that his loyalty and honour were as firm as ever " ; and he steadfastly continued fighting against Montfort, without quarter upon either side. The other barons looked on and grimly kept the ring, neither helping nor hindering. At last Montfort sent the Vicomte de Rohan and other lords to parley with the Constable. But he sternly refused all overtures until the Duke's son had been sent to Josselin as a hostage. He knew his man too well by this time. And all the while the miserable Morbihan lay desolate under the scourge of their continuous and cruel war.



In the end, Montfort realised that he could neither bend Clisson to his will unaided, nor obtain assistance from any town or castle in the Duchy. So he determined at the last to make an end, and accept his stubborn enemy's proposals. The Vicomte de Rohan was at the head of those who bore the Duke's heir into Castle Josselin. Clisson was not long in answering. He rode to the Convent of the Dominicans at Vannes, met Montfort, handed back the boy, and made an honourable peace on his own terms. In 1407 the Constable de Clisson died in Josselin, the year after his wife's death, and was buried in Notre Dame du Roncier, where their tomb still stands, and Alain IX de Rohan reigned in his grandfather's stead. By this châtelain, whose eldest son was slain on the terrible day of St. Aubin du Cormier, was the greater part built of the château as it stands to-day; but the greatest Rohan of this generation was that Pierre de Rohan, Sire de Gié, who inherited the blood of Du Guesclin through his grandfather, and of the Visconti through his mother. It is significant that the façade, which shows so many traces of Italian influence among its Gothic work, should have been in progress during the life-



124.—DRAWING-ROOM : FIFTEENTH CENTURY MANTELPIECE.

time of one of the great captains who went with Charles VIII's armies into Italy. But it cannot be said that Gié's memories of Brittany were pleasant ones, for his mother had poisoned his father, her first husband, and died in the dungeon where her second spouse was careful enough to keep her. The Visconti blood showed a little too plainly in that viperous character. But her son came of a stock which was harder than any serpent's brood. He went with the Admiral de Montauban to the Court of Louis XI, and after being made captain of the important Royal château of Blois he became a great friend of Commynes. What that friendship meant to the Breton captain, in diplomacy and skill, may be judged from the fact that he helped Charles of Amboise to arrange for the government of France when Louis XI fell ill at Chinon; that he was member of the Regent Anne de Beaujeu's council; and that he was able to retain the regard of Louis of Orleans while he calmed the usual revolts in choleric Brittany. Perhaps his most brilliant claim to lasting fame is that he was one of the chief of those who negotiated the



marriage of the Duchess Anne of Brittany with Charles VIII, which led indirectly to her becoming Queen of Louis XII as well, and so brought about that union of Brittany with the Crown of France which only received formal recognition, characteristically enough, in 1532, at Vannes, long after it had been an accomplished fact. The consternation of Europe generally at the marriage of the heiress with the King of France is a fair measure of Brittany's reputation in the eyes of her contemporary world.

The full story of the Maréchal de Gié belongs rather to Amboise and Blois than Josselin. But it may be said here that, as in the case of Clisson, his high office brought him deadly enemies powerful enough to attack and banish him. But, like the Constable again, his honour never bore a stain, and he retired to his château of Le Verger with the reputation of the most honest and capable soldier of his day. If I may pick out one thing for which the Rohans may well consider him among the very greatest men their splendid stock has given to the nation, it would be his realisation that for the moment the strength of France lay in her natural boundaries, and that for the unity and solidification of his country the sound defence of its frontiers by an organised and effective army was the first essential. It was perhaps a result of this Pierre de Rohan's influence that in 1510 Jean, Vicomte de Rohan, finished the Gothic façade begun by Alain in 1440, and married Marie de Bretagne; and it was a Cardinal de Rohan who had welcomed Cæsar Borgia to the Court of Louis XII at Chinon in 1498, when the future Duc de Valentinois brought from the Pope the divorce from Jeanne de France which made it possible for Anne of Brittany to be a twice-crowned Queen. This same noble ecclesiastic was present among the Royal suite which welcomed the Archduke Philip of Austria to Blois. Another brilliant marriage was that of Jean's grandson, René, to Isabeau d'Albret; and in 1577 we find a Mlle. de Rohan among the lovely sirens of the "flying squadron" who attended Catherine de' Medici at Chenonceaux. Their romantic associations sorely tempt me to tell the tale of that lady of the house of Rohan, who at this time suffered great sorrow for the faithfulness of her love to one she might not marry. But you must read it in the one-and-twentieth story of the *Heptameron* of Marguerite de Navarre, wherein the piteous case of Rolandine is fully set forth. Nor can I do more here than hint at the tragedy of the lovely Marie de Rohan, Duchesse de Montbazou, who was beloved by the Abbé de Rancé, and was found dead, after so strange a fashion, in the château of Couzières. Her fate is told in other pages; for after Agrippa d'Aubigné, the last of the old feudal barons, left France, he sold his castles in the Loire valley and elsewhere to the Rohans; and among the landholders of their name in Touraine was another Cardinal, Carlyle's "Mud-Volcano," the dupe of Jeanne de St. Remy, the sorry hero of the strange story of *The Diamond Necklace*, who died in 1802. But it is only possible in this place to give details about the builders of Josselin. After their day I can but hint at the numberless ways in which the Rohan family took their part in the drama of French history, and I must make an end with the bare mention of a few more of their great names.

The barony of Léon, mentioned in previous pages, was the definite appanage of the eldest son by the time Commynes describes the battle of St. Aubin du Cormier, and I find it among the family records in 1552. In 1586 Henri, Duc de Rohan, Prince de Léon and Comte de Porhoet, was the Calvinist chief, and the heroism of the Duchess at the terrible siege of La Rochelle is well known. As a consequence, Josselin was taken from the Rohans and given to their enemies. But the place has had a knack of keeping its right owners ever since its foundation in 1026 by Goethnoc, Vicomte de Porhoet, and it reverted to the family when Henri de Rohan was pardoned, after he had helped, with the Duc de Montbazou, in effecting a reconciliation between Louis XIII and Marie de' Medici. In 1648 the dukedom was bestowed on Henri de Chabot, Marquis de St. Aulnay, husband of the heiress, Marguerite de Rohan, and in 1685 Louis de Rohan-Chabot was the Duc de Rohan. In 1816 appeared another cardinal, the Archbishop of Besançon, who protected the Abbé Dupanloup. Between 1869 and 1892 the château was carefully restored by Charles Louis Josselin, Duc de Rohan; and his son, Charles Louis Alain, Prince de Léon, who succeeded his father in 1893, has been Royalist deputy for Ploermel since 1876, and was re-elected for the eighth time in 1906, without opposition. So carefully was this restoration carried out that the traces of new workmanship are scarcely visible at all, save in the low containing walls of the upper garden, which faithfully follow the



lines of Clisson's fortress, in the beautiful gardens of the moat and the inner pleasure, and in the apartments of the house that are so full of immemorial relics. The present Duchesse de Rohan is descended from the Verteillacs, Grand Seneschals of Périgord, allied to the family of Brantôme, and now worthily represented in the French Army. As readers of her *Lande Fleurie* will know, her talents recall those of Anne de Rohan-Soubise in the sixteenth century and of her own ancestress, the Comtesse de Verteillac, in the eighteenth.

Clisson et Du Guesclin,  
Anne, grande entre toutes,  
Beumanoir, Josselin,  
Ont dormi sous ces voûtes.

The ground that bore the footsteps of Olivier de Clisson's wife, the house that sheltered Marie de Bretagne's husband long ago, this is the fitting home of the Duchesse de Rohan of to-day.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## LANGEAIS, INDRE-ET-LOIRE.\*

BY the will of M. Jacques Siegfried, who died in the spring of 1909, the magnificent castle of Langeais has passed into the protecting hands of the Institut de France, to which the Duc d'Aumale, in the same way, bequeathed Chantilly; and if the treasures gathered in the Musée Condé deserved so permanent and capable a guardianship, the building and furniture which owe so much to the enlightened generosity of

M. Siegfried form a no less appropriate responsibility for the great literary association which has done so much for French history and art. The value of such an institution, easily realisable in any country where the architectural relics of the past still linger, is especially intelligible in France, where a remarkable number of great houses still exist which seem to have outlived the possibilities of habitation. Whether this fact be due to changing economical conditions, to the vicissitudes of domestic politics, or to the trend of European civilisation, I cannot here determine. Many remedies have, with more or less pre-determined method, been



125.—NORTH-WEST CORNER FROM THE COURT.

\* The Property of the Institut de France.



suggested or applied. One of these remedies is the sale of such buildings to the foreign millionaire ; that has been very rarely successful. Another is the marriage of impoverished heirs to wealthy foreign brides ; this has been known to fail. A third is the course chosen by the Duc d'Aumale and M. Siegfried ; and out of many other alternatives I need not mention this last seems to me undoubtedly the best. In too many cases the continued subdivision of the land round the

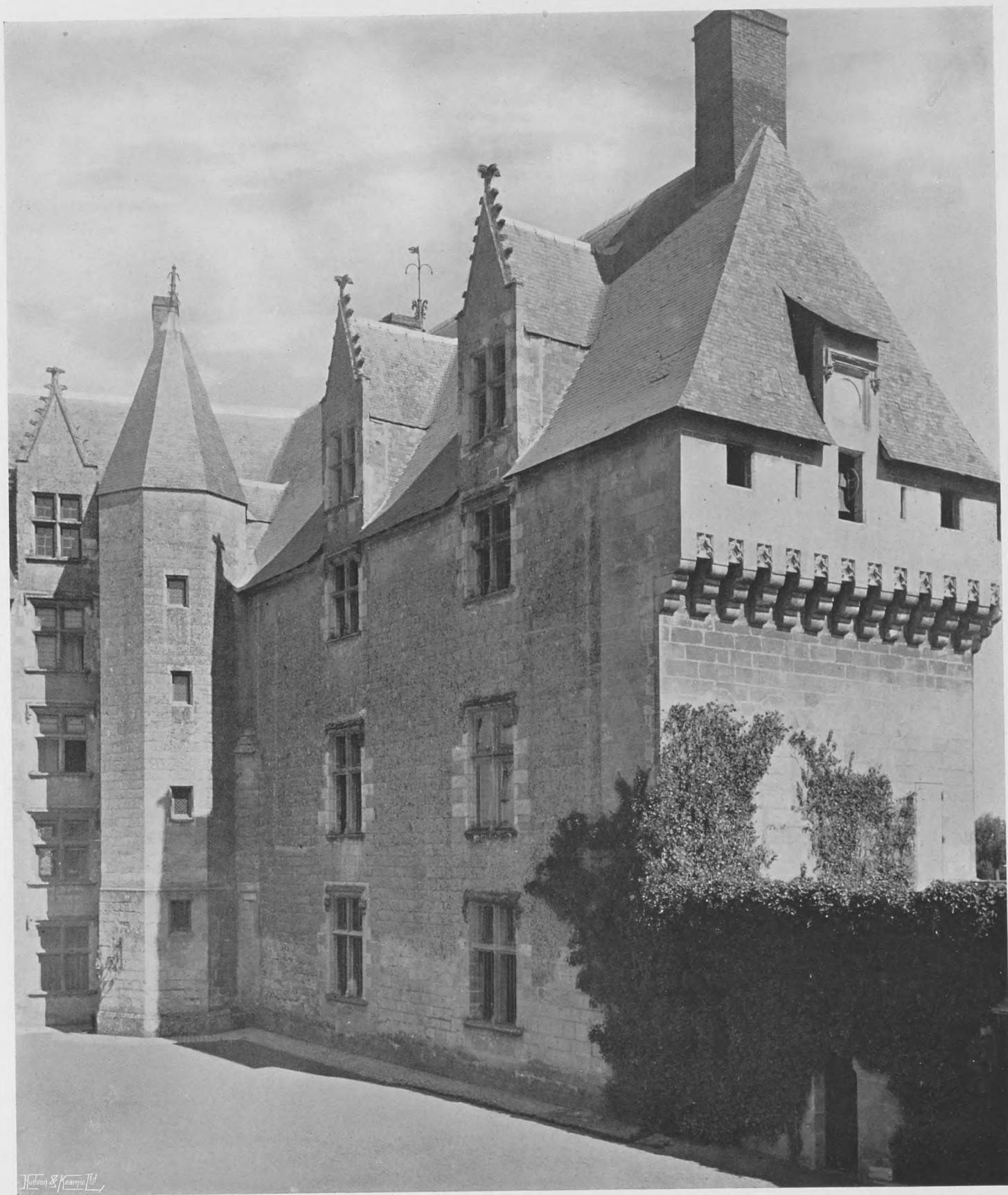


126.—ENTRANCE AND DRAWBRIDGE.

great houses of France has solved the problem of the upkeep of estates in a fashion no less final than disastrous, a fashion which may well give pause to those who advocate too reckless tampering with the conditions of land tenure in England. But its effect on French castles has usually been to hasten the hour of their inevitable decay. Withdrawn from public curiosity and heedless vandalism, the great château behind its sheltering trees and spreading pleasaunces



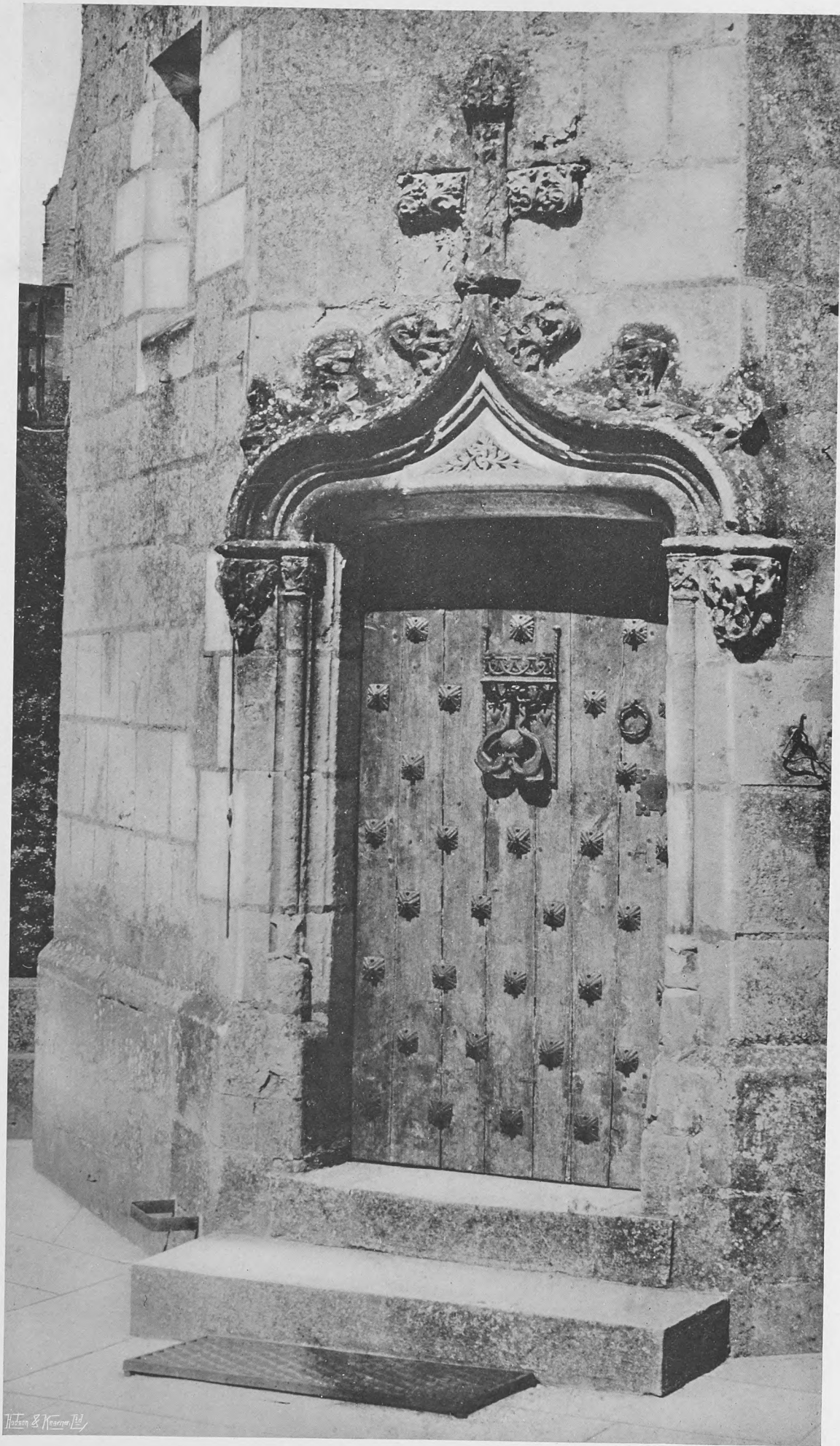
was at least able to fall gently into a mellowed old age of undisturbed repose. Time proved far kinder than the hand of man. But when the village or the town had been permitted to spread its squalid houses and mean streets right up to the entrance gates of the great house, the castle was almost inevitably doomed. Debased to the most ignoble uses by the Government, it was neither valued nor respected when its fabric—too weak at last for prisons, barracks or even lunatic asylums—was handed over to the surrounding inhabitants. They generally used it as a quarry for hewn stone. Langeais, though the great towers of its portal open at the end of the village street, has been more fortunate. It has always dominated the villagers. By a curious freak of Fate, in that land of sudden catastrophe and terror, it has preserved its line of owners unbroken, even through the red days of the Revolution. It remains one of the few examples of fifteenth century architecture at the time when purely military safeguards were



127.—NORTH-EAST CORNER FROM THE COURT.



being gradually modified by the growing needs of social and domestic intercourse. Its main fabric is in perfect repair, and all that M. Siegfried's architect had to do was to strengthen structural weaknesses by the simplest methods. Within, it is probably the best example in existence of a reconstructed fifteenth century home, and all the furniture and fittings which are not of that period are most carefully copied from the best types to be had. The result is that, though necessarily we cannot see in the far older Langeais what may be found, for instance, in seventeenth century Cheverny—the intimate and actual possessions of the family who built it—yet we can to-day walk through the rooms where Anne of Brittany was married without a single shock of incongruity or repulsion. The guardianship of the Institut de France is a guarantee that, while France stands, all visitors to



128.—THE NORTH-WEST DOORWAY.

Langeais can see the portrait of the resolute little Breton and her two Royal husbands amid appropriate surroundings; and it is worth while to look at her, for no other woman is likely to be twice crowned Queen of France again.



If the towers of Langeais stood upon the eminence which was usually chosen by the old fortress builders for their work, it would make a greater impression at first sight on the visitor. Only when he sees the inner side from the courtyard, or when he looks out over the valley from the countless little windows of the machicolated battlements, will he realise the reason for its locality. It was built while the ruins of the older castle, held by the Black Prince's soldiers,



129.—A BEDROOM, TAPESTRY AND CABINET.

were still obstructing the higher ground behind the present structure, and while the donjon of Fulk Nerra, the Black Count of Anjou, was much more than the mere shell of masonry that still remains. But from its battlements you may see as far as the towers of Tours Cathedral; and in the nearer landscape are Villandry and Cinq Mars. To the south lies the forest of Chinon. By the Indre rise the spires and roofs of Ussé. Beneath flows the smooth current of the Loire. Hardly a single point of strategical importance in a wide neighbourhood is invisible, and the houses of Langeais itself are almost close enough to be protected by bow-shot from its castle's walls.

Those walls are nearly eight feet thick, as you may see in your approach from the road outside, through the dark archway, and into the sudden brightness of the court. Here the sterner features of the military exterior are modified. Instead of battlements, a mere cornice crowns the walls beneath the roof-line. Four small towers, each with its spiral staircase, diversify the line of the façade. The rugged strength of the donjon on the left is almost hidden. The combination of the fortress with the dwelling-house is well-nigh complete, though we shall see it carried many a step further elsewhere, until the fortress altogether disappears.

Within, the château, built in 1464 for Louis XI by his treasurer, Jean Bourré, is simply arranged, but finely proportioned, and the plan of the rooms remains the same, tier above tier. Their floors are richly tiled, their walls hidden with splendid tapestries. Within them are Flemish cabinets, Spanish leather-work and French furniture in oak and walnut. In the



Guard Room is a vast chimney-piece with the arms of Anne of Brittany. In the great hall the letters A and K commemorate the fact that here she was married to Charles VIII of France. Her life, from its earliest years to within a very short time of her death, was almost continuously engaged in various aspects of the marriage question. Michelet roundly abuses her for projects which, if successful, might have ruined France. But the verdict is somewhat too harsh. It may well be that as her own girlish fancies were so ruthlessly trampled on for political reasons she was always on the look-out for political power from fresh alliances, and in that search she sometimes made mistakes. It may be true that Maximilian was her first and only love, that Brittany was her only fatherland; but she was far from being the embittered, ambitious, isolated schemer Michelet portrays.

To Francis, Duke of Brittany, and Margaret of Foix, his wife, was born at Nantes in January, 1476, a daughter, Anne. His only other child was a girl as well. Françoise de Dinan, of the great house of Laval, cared for the heiress, and the usual reports of the precocity and learning of the young Princess were soon being circulated; but she was certainly no scholar, and her talents were more due to common-sense and tenacity than to any educational advantages. When only nine she lost the best influence of all, the affection of a noble mother, who died, it is to be feared, in grief for an unfaithful husband. Three years afterwards that husband was in his grave as well. Much may be forgiven an orphan deprived so early of the natural guardians of her great estate. At twelve years old she was unquestioned mistress of one of the oldest



130.—A BEDROOM.

independent Duchies in Europe. Small wonder is it that her guardians, de Rieux and de Comminges, immediately hastened to arrange a betrothal.

When Anne was only seven, the first of the long list of aspirants to her hand had been assassinated, for she had been already promised by her father to the eldest son of our Edward IV. Besides this, Maximilian of Austria was suggested, whose daughter was betrothed at three years old to Charles, then Dauphin of France. A large section of the Breton nobility



also desired yet a third claimant, Alain d'Albret, brother to that Countess of Laval who was the young Princess's governess. A fourth pretender to that splendid dowry was the Vicomte de Rohan's son, whose mother was the daughter of the first Francis, Duke of Brittany. At last, in 1490, the Council chose the strongest suitor, Maximilian, heir to the Imperial crown, and the marriage ceremony was carried out forthwith, by proxy. The signature, "Queen of the Romans," suggested by the ostentation of the Breton Chancellor, revealed to a very angry French Court the ceremony at which most of Brittany was already much amused. But so direct a violation of the treaty of St. Aubin proved no laughing matter. Early in the next year the young King Charles was at Nantes, and with him were Louis of Orleans, Anne de Beaujeu (daughter of Louis XI) and Dunois, who had been appointed a kind of honorary adviser to her guardians by Anne's father. The fact that they had disregarded his opinions as well as broken their treaty with the King of France did not assist the Bretons' cause.

For a long time the little Duchess held out stubbornly. But by a personal interview Charles was at last able to secure what Maximilian had lost for want of it. In three days from the time he met her at Rennes he was betrothed to her in the Chapel of Notre Dame, hard by the gates. Whether she preferred the certainty of being Queen of France to the possibility of becoming Empress I cannot tell; nor does history relate the arguments her Royal suitor used to break down her fidelity to Maximilian and to destroy the alleged vitality of the vicarious marriage. Certainly it can scarcely have been the personal beauty of Charles himself which finally prevailed. I need not here give the somewhat distasteful details of his physiognomy, but I may suggest that his compensating charms of manner and address must have been extraordinarily great if personality indeed had anything to do with such alliances. On the whole, it does not appear to have very deeply influenced this one; for, on the one hand, Anne desired safety for her Duchy and immediate sovereignty for herself, while Charles was ready to do a great deal to secure so bright a jewel as Brittany for the Crown of France after the many disastrous wars it had occasioned, and the one man who was most thoroughly badly treated in the whole affair was Maximilian. Not only did he lose his bride (by proxy), but he saw the French King deliberately reject his daughter, who had been betrothed to Charles since 1482.

The trials of the young Princess were not over, however. Dunois, whose influence had done much to secure the betrothal, died suddenly on his way from Nantes to Tours. Anne's younger sister, the last of her immediate family, died in August, 1490. She must have felt singularly lonely. By November she had left Rennes secretly with only three members of her household on her way to Langeais and her wedding. The actual binding ceremony was not to take place at once, for time was necessary for the preparations; but it was urgent to get Anne into a safe place and to put her future beyond question and her person out of danger. The natural resentment of Maximilian was indeed a formidable peril, for Spain and England were on that point ready to support the King of the Romans. But the triple cord was somewhat easily broken; Maximilian had to content himself with the retention of Artois and Burgundy, his daughter's dowry.

In the archives of Nantes some accounts of the magnificence in which Anne appeared at Langeais have been preserved. On her journey into France she brought two "camp beds" with her, which were very far indeed from being the plain and simple articles of furniture suggested by the words to-day, for the simpler one cost about three hundred pounds, and the other was festooned in crimson, embroidered with gold, lined with blue taffetas and enriched with cords of cloth of gold, the whole being some ten times as valuable. The horses of her chariot were harnessed in black velvet and crimson, and her "travelling dress" cost the handsome sum of over two thousand pounds. Her wedding dress was, naturally, more sumptuous still, for it was made of that cloth of gold on which the pattern was worked in high relief, a style which involves about two hundred and fifty pounds a yard. When you add that it was trimmed in sable, you will recognise that the estimate of over five thousand pounds for the whole toilet, made by Constance Countess De La Warr in her life of the Queen, cannot be far wrong; and I am glad to have the original documents explained by so good an authority on these high matters of feminine attire. The first lady-in-waiting at the ceremony wore violet velvet, and the maids of honour were arrayed in tansy satin.



Business as well as pleasure entered into that December day's proceedings in 1491, for the bride contracted to her groom the entire possession of her Duchy irrevocably and bound herself, in case she survived him, never to take any other husband than his successor or that successor's heir. This provision has often been pointed out as a good example of the young Princess's grasping nature. She was much too young to see so far ahead. The stipulation was inserted by those older men who had seen both Duchy and Kingdom lose their blood and treasure in unprofitable internecine strife, and who had determined to put an end to such disastrous futilities for ever. But every provision was made for the bride's dignity and welfare, and so clearly was this recognised by her own supporters that Jean de Châlons, Prince of Orange, the son of her father's sister, and the best of the three former claimants to the throne of Brittany, entirely renounced to her all rights he may have urged in that direction.

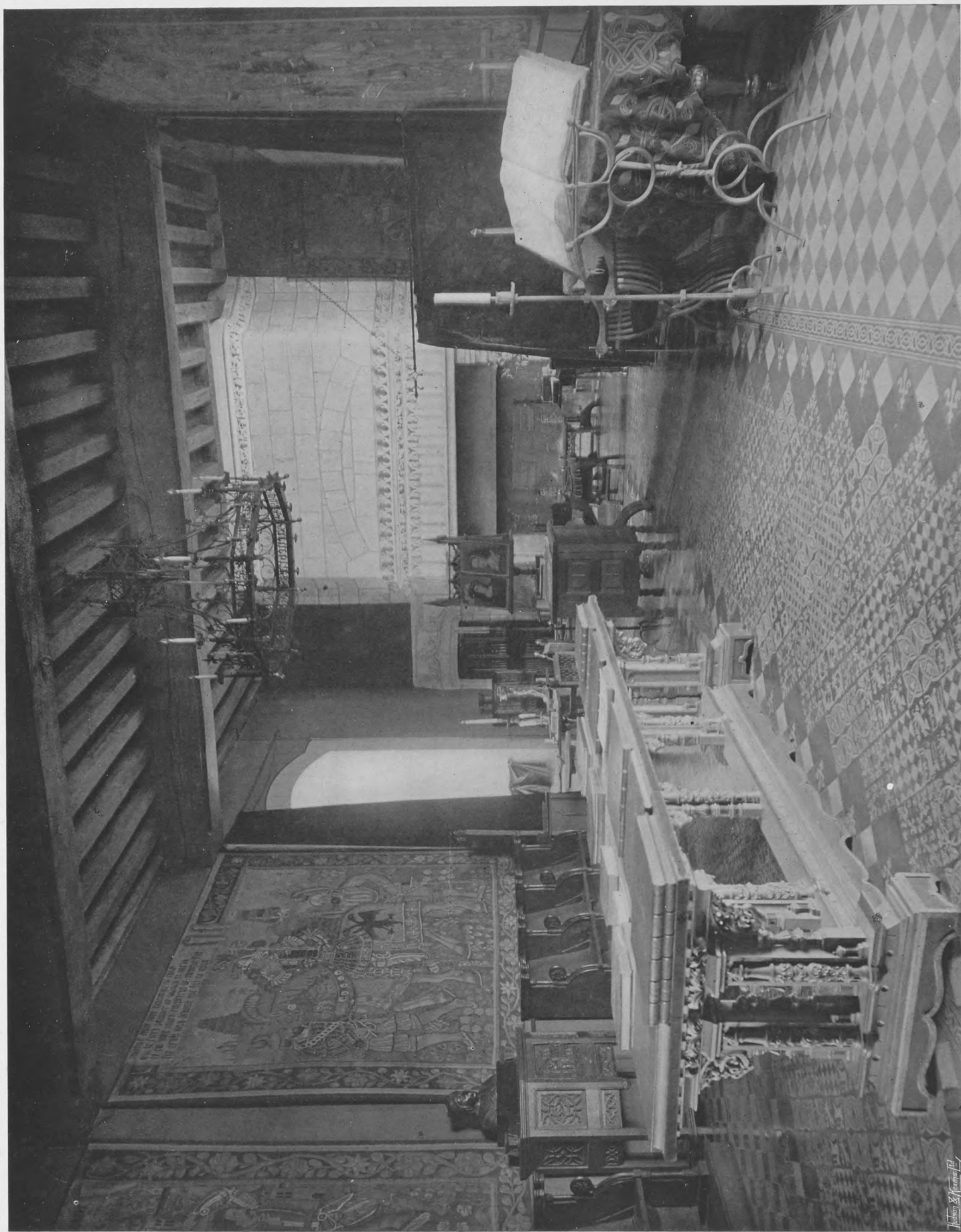
The most interesting thing about the contract is that, though it is even more full of "the subtilties of law" than almost any other I have seen, nearly every clause in it came into force within a few years after it had been signed. The name of Jean de Châlons is also, in this connection, irresistibly attractive to any lover of the old genealogies. We have seen already that Anne herself was almost wedded to an English Prince; but Jean de Châlons, Prince of Orange, the nearest claimant to her Duchy, was the ancestor of an English King. His house traced back to that Bertrand des Baux who became of Orange by his marriage to the heiress Tiburge, and who was created first Prince of Orange by Frederick Barbarossa. Through the marriage of another of its heiresses the house of Orange had joined to itself the fortunes of Châlons, a Burgundian lordship; and in 1531 a yet more important



131.—ORIGINAL CHIMNEY-PIECE IN THE SALLE-A-MANGER.

connection was formed by the marriage of a third heiress, Claude, to Henry of Nassau, whereby the Princes of Orange, already technically recognised as the equals of any Sovereign with whom they had to deal, became also the first magistrates of a great commonwealth, and thus provided for Mary (daughter of our Charles I) a husband who became William I of Ireland, Second of Scotland, Third of England, Fourth of Normandy and Tenth of Orange, that little town in the Rhone Valley which was no doubt well-nigh forgotten by the great Princes who bore its empty title on far greater thrones. One of them was in the great hall of Langeais, which you may still visit, for the marriage of the Princess of the Brittany he had originally claimed through his mother; and he forms a curious and interesting link between her and the English visitor. The Queen was crowned at St. Denis in February, 1492, and made her solemn entry into Paris the day afterwards.



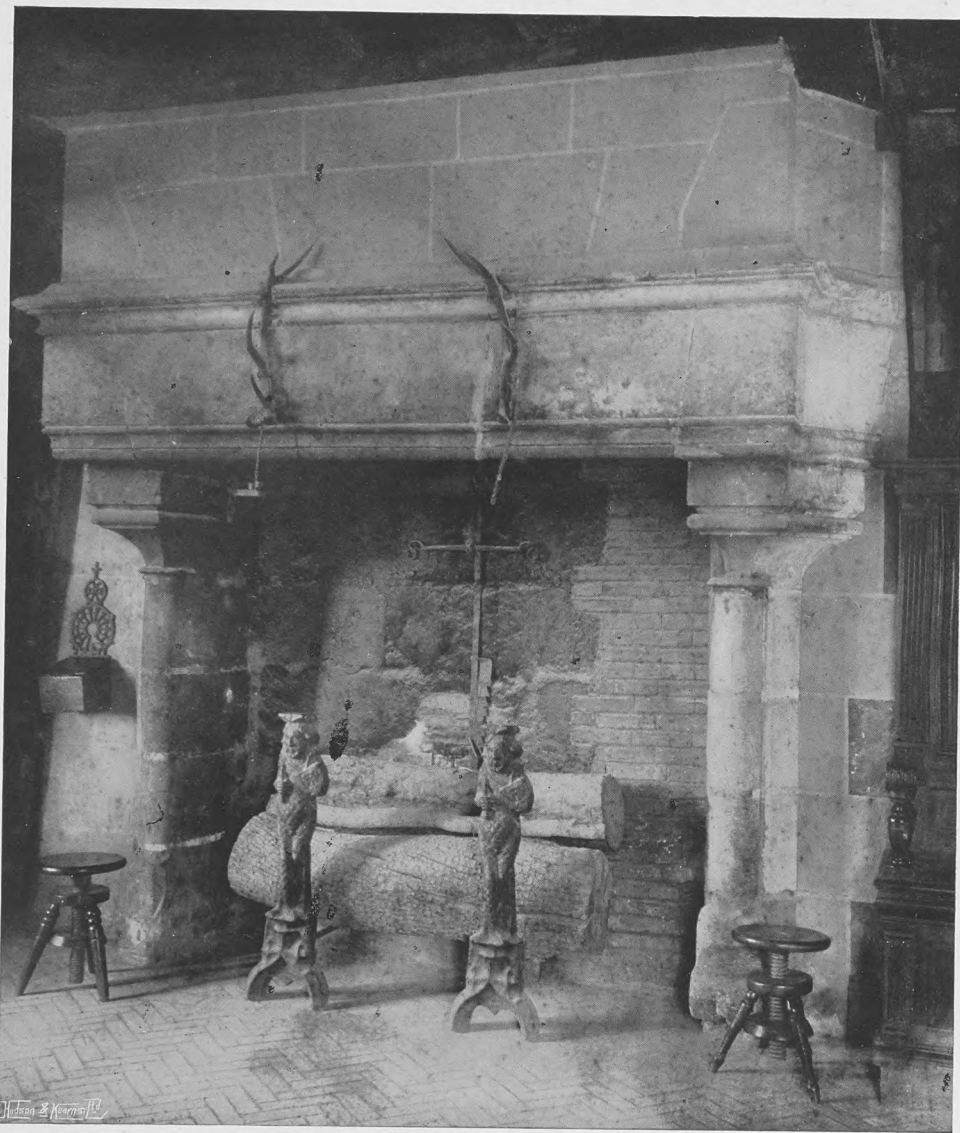


132.—GRAND SALON.



But Anne disliked the French capital, and Amboise was soon fitted out for her reception. Her strong will and characteristic originality of temperament were quickly appreciated by all with whom she came in contact. Just as the rest of Europe, after the first outburst of annoyance, had to accept her marriage as an accomplished fact, so the French Court, and even the proudest of its ladies, had to accept the little Breton as a Queen indeed. It speaks well for her that the Princess Margaret, Maximilian's daughter, who had been perhaps most hardly treated of anyone by the accidents of diplomacy, remained her firm friend, even after her second marriage. She made Amboise and Plessis-lez-Tours her headquarters at first, and travelled, by choice, along the Loire and Seine when it was necessary to change her residence or rejoin the King after he had been called away upon affairs of State; and on her royal barge she was not above playing for high stakes to pass away the time on her unhurried journeys. A matter of fifty gold crowns is mentioned, paid for these purposes, in her treasurer's accounts.

She was about sixteen when her son was born in the Château of Plessis-lez-Tours in October, 1492, and his god-mother was the Queen of Sicily, widow of René of Anjou. The baby was carried to the font by Jean de Châlons, robed in cloth of gold, and by St. Francis of Paula was christened Charles Orlando. The child's portrait is one of the most pathetic masterpieces of painting of that time, and his tomb is still the finest piece of sculpture in Tours Cathedral. A hundred archers of the Scottish Guard had watched over the little Prince in Amboise, but they were powerless against a more than mortal foe. In August, 1494, Charles crossed the border into Italy. In July, 1495, mounted on his black charger, Savoy, he won the disastrous victory of Fornovo. By November he was back in



133.—AN OLD FIREPLACE.

Lyons. Less than a month afterwards his son was dead. Louis of Orleans, joining with too boisterous merriment in the pastimes curiously devised for the comfort of the sorrowing parents, fell into the grave displeasure of the Queen; and soon afterwards Charles of Angoulême, the husband of Louise of Savoy, died, leaving a son who was to become Francis I. For none of the Queen Anne's male children lived. She was as unlucky as her namesake on the English throne in later centuries. The tomb in Tours Cathedral is the monument of her sorrows. On the eve of Palm Sunday her husband died at Amboise. It is a pathetic ending to that high festival in the halls of Langeais.

Louis of Orleans hastened from Blois to make, as the new King Louis XII, all the necessary arrangements for the ceremonial funeral of his hapless predecessor. The Government of Brittany was entrusted for the time being to Jean de Châlons. The marriage contract of Langeais seemed at first to have been rendered nugatory, for the provision that Anne should



marry either Charles's successor or that successor's heir did not appear feasible while Louis XII was still married and the young François d'Angoulême was only four years old. But the widow had made up her mind; and it was not, we may be sure, without a fairly accurate prevision of the future that she re-entered Brittany as its sovereign Duchess after the days of her official mourning in Paris were over. She was well aware not only that Louis had married against his will, under the orders of Louis XI, but also that the Pope would be quite likely to annul the marriage. It was annulled by Pope Alexander VI without difficulty. The father of Cæsar Borgia could not be over-scrupulous, and the son brought over the decree to Chinon, and was rewarded with the ill-omened title of Duc de Valentinois. The King went forth without delay to court the Duchess; in January, 1499, they were married at Nantes, and there is little doubt that they were genuinely fond of one another. There had not been too much diplomacy to stifle love, and before the year's end was born her daughter, Claude, who was to become the Queen of Francis I. It was as well, both for France and Brittany, that Anne's ambitious project of a marriage with the future Emperor, Charles V, came to nothing, owing to the statesmanlike



134.—TOURS CATHEDRAL: TOMB OF CHILDREN OF CHARLES VIII.

opposition of Georges d'Amboise. Such opposition was not always an easy matter, as Pierre de Rohan, Maréchal de Gié, discovered to his cost, in spite of being one of the King's favourite Ministers. He it was who had been entrusted with the dangerous task of guarding the future Francis I at Amboise; and the furiously resentful Breton, in an access of the jealousy which had begun to realise that no son of her own would reign in France, banished the Marshal to his country home at Le Verger, and refused to recognise any of the real services he had performed for his country. The fact that he was a Breton, too, seems to have incensed her all the more; for she evidently expected his support for herself, in spite of any of the larger considerations necessary for the welfare of the realm.

Anne of Brittany, as she was always called, died on January 9th, 1514, at the Château of Blois, and her heart was sent to Nantes, to be with her beloved Bretons for ever. Pierre Choque, her King-at-Arms, wrote the record of her sumptuous funeral, and Jean de Paris illustrated the manuscript with clever miniatures. The marriage of her daughter Claude to Francis, the heir, took place soon afterwards. Both bride and groom wore black. A four-



post bed and a counterpane seem to have been her only presents. It was very different from that blithesome wedding on the Loire which I described at the beginning of this paper.

Langeais had no more scenes so historic or so interesting within its massive walls. Before it came to M. Siegfried it was owned by Louise de Guise, by Cinq Mars and by the Duc de Luynes ; but its latest private owner was its most deserving châtelain, and it is his memory that will linger longest round its battlements with those of the resolute, self-willed little Queen who brought here the richest dowry which the Crown of France had ever won. At seventeen years of age she is described by Contarini, the Venetian Ambassador, as "small and thin, limping visibly on one leg, though she wears pattens, but so clever for her years that whatever she gets into her head she must by all means obtain it, by smiles, or tears, or any other way." The courtly Brantôme, who mentions her limp also, asserts that it did not spoil her charm, and that other lovely ladies of his acquaintance had the same slight defect, which seemed only an additional attraction. Even her revengeful character he only chronicles with regret, "if indeed vengeance be a sin, so sweet and beautiful as it is." He was thoroughly in sympathy with the fashion of having ladies at Court, which she introduced, though her maids of honour were very different from the Escadron Volant of the Valois. She cared for them more as Bretons than as comrades, it may be suspected. "Voilà mes Bretons," she used to say of her bodyguard, "sur la Perche qui m'attendent." Her soldiers kept as far aloof from France as she did, in her heart.

The blame of Michelet is severe, and partly just. But for the councillors who thwarted her, she might indeed have ruined France. But at Langeais you forget her faults ; you remember her disappointed motherhood ; you recall the sturdy courage and independence that fitted out the good ship Cordelière, which went down, blazing, grappled to her enemy, the Regent of England, off Saint-Marché in 1513 ; you think of the epitaph upon her tomb :

Cy gist Anne qui fut femme de deux grands rois,  
En tout grande cette fois, comme reyne deux fois.  
Jamais reyne comme elle n'enrichit tant la France,  
Voilà que c'est d'avoir une grande alliance.



135.—A KNOCKER.



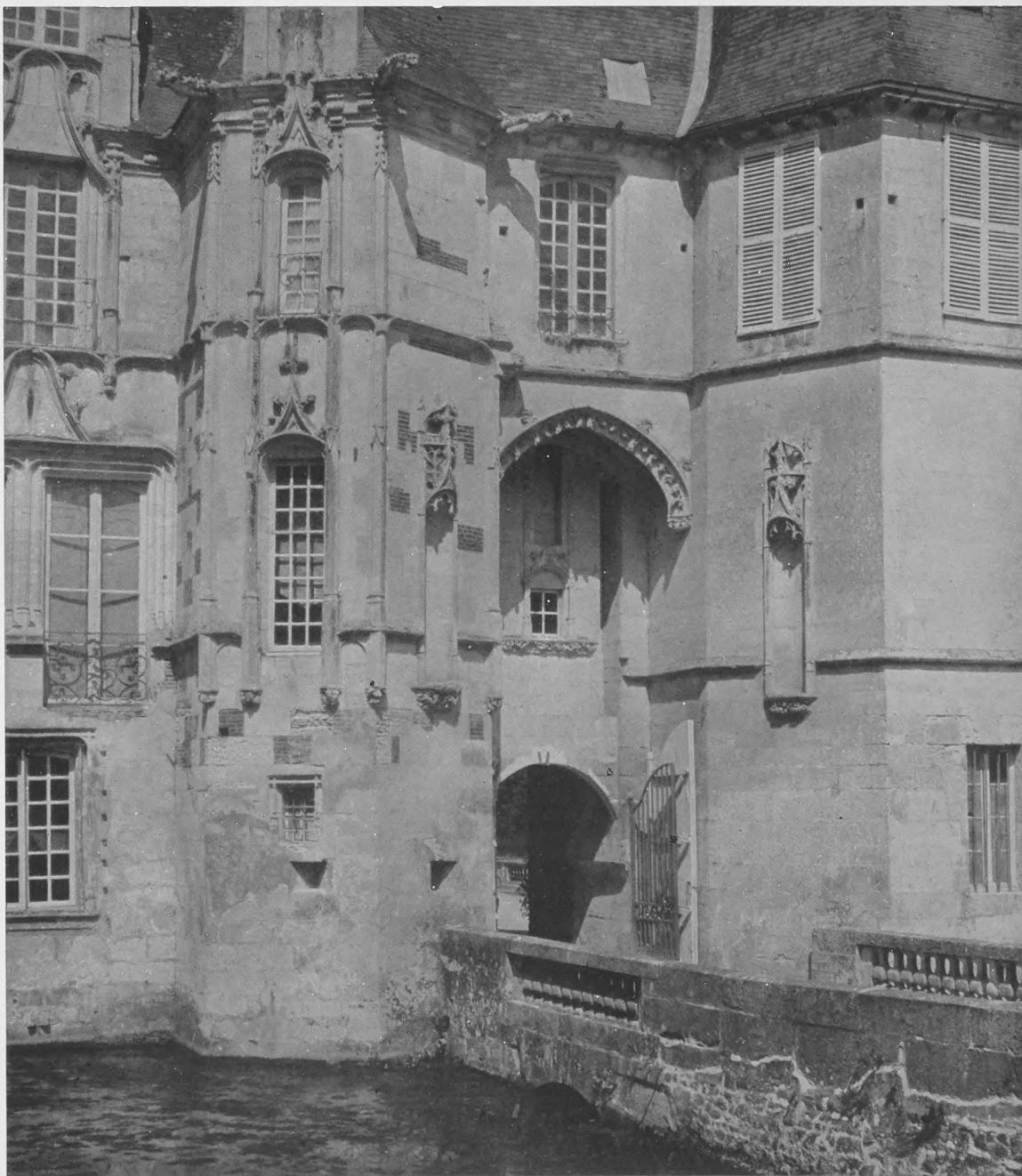
## CHAPTER IX.

## THE CHATEAU D'O, NEAR MORTREE, ORNE.\*

IT is somewhat embarrassing even to write the name of a place spelled with only one letter, which might easily be taken for a mere cypher. But I shall make no efforts whatever to explain its derivation beyond saying that if the chief hero of Château d'O was an unmitigated villain, the history of the first Treasurer of Henri Quatre is better than nothing; and than his country house, considered as a lesson in mixed styles of architecture, the courageous student can find nothing better.

The château is built round three sides of a rectangular figure, the fourth being open to the west. It has suffered terribly from vandalisms of every kind in several centuries; but though

most of its sheltering trees have been cut down, the waters of its broad moat still surround its walls; and on the north façade, which contains the main entrance, we can still see a great deal of what Charles d'O and Louise, his wife, built, in 1505, upon the remnants of an older feudal fortress of which scarcely anything now remains. The extraordinary assemblage of variously built and different-sized roofs and turrets, which is the main characteristic of the place, is on this north side the first thing noticeable as the traveller approaches from a distance. But as he draws nearer and finally stands



136.—THE MAIN GATEWAY AND BRIDGE OVER THE MOAT.

\* The Property of General Henry d'Aubigny.





137.—NORTHERN FACADE, WITH MAIN ENTRANCE.



on the old balustraded bridge, he begins to notice the wealth of decoration carved over every angle of the walls. I may be wrong, but it has always seemed to me that these balustrades, which obviously were originally placed from one end of this bridge to the other (as is the case on the eastern side), were deliberately removed when the hideous "restorations" of 1770 were going on, and were fitted into that line of light and shadow just at the springing of the roof which is the only redeeming feature of the extraordinarily ugly eastern front. The very different size of the towers on each side of the main northern gateway is an indication that the one on the right may well have been a survival of the older building, especially as the smaller tower on the left is cleverly balanced by the corbelled turret further to the east, and, with it, forms a fitting but fantastic framework for the larger windows crowned by the crested dormer in the roof, all fretted with pinnacles and tracery. The gateway itself is skilfully emphasised by the recessed arch above, which is richly carved and flanked by the delicate canopy work over two empty niches.

With all the fear of Mr. Reginald Blomfield's restraining scholarship before me, I should hesitate to praise the details of this façade. He may even call its architect an "ornamentalist" without offending my susceptibilities. For this is very different from the work either of Louis XII or of Francis I at Blois, though we shall see certain striking resemblances when we pass inside, as is only likely considering the date of this construction. But the architect of Charles d'O was not a master of his craft. His building has need of all the associations of age, of history, of setting, of a curious wilfulness and disregard of formal symmetry, to recommend it to the modern critic. It is rather a virtue than a fault that every window and every scheme of carving should be different from the rest. But here the effort after originality has exhausted the inventiveness of the designer. He degenerates into weak arabesques, meaningless flourishes, exaggerated scrolls. He has not that inner sense of true proportion which allowed so many of his more gifted compatriots to give full rein to the richest outbursts of their fantasy. In spite of all this, I should not wish either to deny the charm of the place to me or to refuse it that curious reflection of its most famous owner's character which I have so often felt in other ancient houses. François d'O was just such another mosaic of good and bad. But I fear that the kindly hand of Time can do nothing to recommend his failures to the historian of to-day; and the mutilations he suffered were even worse than the vandalisms perpetrated on his home; for they were not merely needless, they were self inflicted; they did not merely involve the harmony and proportion of senseless blocks of worked stone, but they wrecked the reputation of a family as old as the Crusades.

When you have passed through the main entrance into the courtyard, in many ways the most satisfactory part of the whole château, you see in the doorway set at the flattened angle of a tower a reflection of the riot of decoration outside and a medallion beautiful enough to make you realise what was lost when so much of the old work was torn down to make room for the meaningless monstrosities of the eighteenth century. On the right hand of this door is the arcade, which is, to my mind, the most successful piece of design in the building; and those who can compare it with the gallery of Louis XII at Blois will not fail to notice how wonderfully similar are these columns of the Château d'O, down to the very details of their decorative carving. Their beauty has earned them the only engraving vouchsafed to this building in the monumental volumes of Léon Palustre, who uses the Château d'O chiefly as a text for bewailing the devastations of 1770, and selects for illustration this "promenoir de sept arcades en anse de panier aux colonnes richement décorées." But you must be careful not to imagine that the ermines of the Château d'O have anything like the same signification as the ermines at Blois, at Langeais, or at Loches. They are the armorial bearings of Charles d'O, and the letters K and L, which appear in the same decorations, are the initials of himself (Karolus) and of his wife (Louise).

I hardly like to take you out of this courtyard again; but it is pleasant to look at the south-eastern angle of the house from outside; and since you must be taught by sad experience what crimes people really can commit, you must walk across the lawn and look firmly at the east façade, which you will only realise to be a part of Château d'O at all when you see the queer clump of angled roofs and chimneys at its northern end. The south-eastern angle of the



building affords also a little further consolation, for there is no doubt that this is one of the old bastions of the fourteenth century fortress, with a necessary window or two cut into its thick walls. And so you may wander back towards the entrance, and if you will sit on the broad, grey coping-stone of the old bridge, I will tell you something about François d'O, the grandson of the builder of the north façade in front of you, and the son of Jean, Seigneur d'O, de Fresnes, and de Maillebois and his wife, Hélène d'Illiers of Manou.

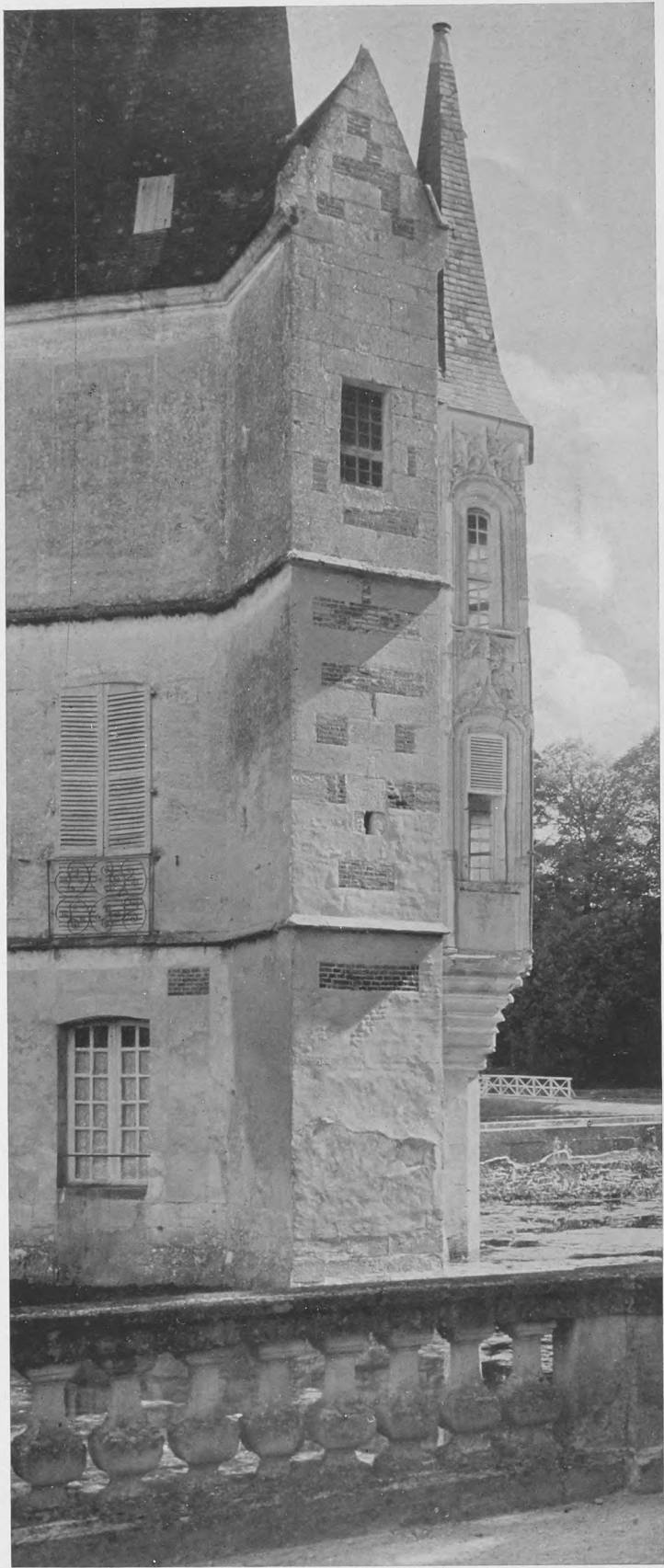
François d'O gained an evil notoriety early in his career at Court by being recognised as one of the infamous band of Mignons of Henry III, among whom the better known were Bellegrade, Louvré, Villequier, Quélus, Saint-Luc, Maugiron, Saint-Mégrin and Livarot, while the best of a bad lot were, perhaps, Anne de Joyeuse, a man of high Catholic family and reckless daring, who was made High Admiral, and the famous Gascon, Nogaret d'Epernon, who received the governorships of Metz, Toul and Verdun. After Henry III had been assassinated, the head of the corpse was supported by Clermont d'Entraques when Henry IV came into the death-chamber. It must have been a curious and ghastly scene, and full descriptions of it have been left by both d'Aubigné and Sully. The latter tells us that among the first, after the Scottish Guard, who made their reverence to the new Sovereign on his arrival at Saint Cloud were Armand de Gontaut, Maréchal de Biron; Roger de Saint-Lary de Bellegarde, the Master of Horse; François d'O, Governor of Paris and "Surintendant des finances," with his uncle of Manou; Joachim de Châteauneuf, Maréchal de Dampierre, and others of the party of the Duc de Longueville. But these men were far from attaching any sentiment of permanent loyalty to their conventional greeting. The Duc d'Epernon took the frank course of leaving the Court altogether. The Catholics chose François d'O (of all men) for the declaration that they would never accept a heretic upon the throne of France: François d'O, whom Michelet's indignant rhetoric describes as "insecte de garde-robe qui avait grossi engraisé, on n'ose dire comment. Son cynisme audacieux et sa langue de fille publique avait continué sa faveur." In the councils of the late monarch his chief distinction had been his invariable power of producing money somehow, or suggesting fresh means of flaying the sheep his predecessors had already fleeced.



138.—ARCADE AND DOORWAY OF THE INNER COURT.



From lips like these it must have been hard for Henry IV to accept with patience such a message. But the Béarnais was nothing if not polite. It is difficult to believe in all the oratory which d'Aubigné complacently records; but both he and Sully agree that the new King realised at once the vital importance of these first precarious hours of royalty, and quietly gave such



139.—THE NORTH-EASTERN ANGLE.

military orders as were possible to assure the situation. With reference to the announcement of François d'O, he could only temporise. He knew that, apart from all the other factions, the Catholics themselves were divided into a party definitely hostile to himself, a party which would remain lukewarm even if he abjured the Protestant faith, and only a very few who were wholly on his side in any case. Moreover, he could not but admit that his very loyalty to the late King had to some extent put him into the power of the unswerving Catholics; and he was quite keen enough to see that none of these placeholders and governors, who had enriched themselves for years by speculation in the provinces, would welcome an impoverished Sovereign so terribly in need of money. Finally, there were all the sinister possibilities of the "Ligue," of Spanish men and money, of German, Swiss and Italian mercenaries, of Savoy and the Prince of Parma. No wonder, when the Catholics summed up their own position, they felt confident enough in giving François d'O his message to deliver. But even their scheming brains must have been surprised by Henry's parry to so shrewd a thrust. He asked for six months to learn the doctrines of the Catholic Faith before accepting them, and he continued François d'O in the post of Minister of Finance.

Time was all Henry wanted. By his brilliant personal courage, by his unswerving confidence that France, as a whole, was with him, however black the sky might sometimes look, and by his firm belief that in England and elsewhere he could counterbalance any foreign allies of the League, he was able to hold out long after his faintest chance seemed gone. The League might get Spanish help, but at the price of dividing France with Spain. When Elizabeth asked Henry IV for similar payment, he refused her even Calais. He marched northwards towards

Dieppe, replying to the salutations of the Mayor and Corporation with his usual gaiety: "No ceremony, my friends! All I ask of you is your hearts, some sound wine and bread, some kindly hospitality." Having made sure of a retreat in case of need, he deployed his little army of seven thousand, waited cheerily for the attack of Mayenne's thirty thousand troops, and sat down meanwhile to indite a letter to his Corisande—one of the great letters of





140.—THE NORTH-EASTERN CORNER OF THE MOAT.



history: "Dear Heart it is a marvel how I keep alive with all the work I have to do . . . but I and my cause both flourish. . . . I await the enemy, and with God's help I'll give them the worst of the bargain. I send you a million kisses from the trenches before Arques." Givry had been right indeed when he had saluted Henry, after the scene with François d'O, with



141.—THE COURTYARD OPENING TO THE SOUTH.

the round assertion: "Sire, vous êtes le roi des braves et ne serez abandonné que des poltrons." No cowards were wanted in that heroic little band of brothers before Arques. No cowards could crush them even by the weight of overwhelming numbers.

This is no place to tell of that victorious fight which echoed through Europe shortly afterwards, and roused so passionate an outburst of the ancient chivalry that it did more for Henry's cause than all the politics and theology he could ever have devised. The cannon of the castle of Arques covered the approaches to the King's position. Before it lay a thick forest. Behind it and on the left flank ran a stream with wide and marshy banks. Maréchal de Biron cunningly entrenched the ground as well, and he had plenty of time to do so while Mayenne and his princes moved slowly and luxuriously forward. At last, on September 21st, 1589, they came in touch. There was grave danger at one moment when the German lansquenets, who were supposed to have surrendered, rushed upon the Royalists suddenly and



nearly took the trenches. But the King turned to Damours, the Huguenot Pastor, and in an instant the Protestant lines broke out into their battle hymn: "Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered: let them also that hate Him flee before Him. Like as the smoke vanisheth so shalt Thou drive them away: and like as wax melteth at the fire so let the ungodly perish at the presence of God." Châtillon, Coligny's son, flung himself on the Leaguers' flank with five hundred Huguenot arquebusiers and routed the cavalry. As the psalm died away the sun broke through the mist. Straight into the mass of Mayenne's Swiss the cannon from Arques poured shot at close quarters. The retreat became a rout. Henry and his seven thousand had scattered more than four times as many. Mayenne and his thirty thousand had perished like wax before the fire.

François d'O, watching it all from Dieppe, can scarce have known which side to take. The news came like a thunder-clap upon the Catholics in Paris. Its effect was curiously increased by the news that Venice had recognised the legitimate claims of Henry IV. On March 14th, 1590, came news of Ivry, too, and another victory for the "Panache Blanche" that was now to be immortal. In that year died four great men—Ambroise Paré, Bernard Palissy, La Noue and the brave Châtillon, the last two strong champions of King Henry's cause. But he was fain to go forward, with very different servants, and to use what tools he had. François d'O was one of them. We must turn to him again after a refreshing interlude in the open air.

"The King," writes Sully in 1590, "had neither money nor any quick means of raising money. So he went to ask for some from his Minister of Finance. But François d'O (who



142.—PART OF THE INNER COURT.

was also Governor of Paris and the Ile de France) secretly hated the King, and was delighted to augment his embarrassments, so he made the same reply to each request. . . . Henry at that time had neither a knowledge of finance nor any taste for it; but he forced himself to understand various details and finally compelled François d'O to hand over certain money which



he was proved to have received, and with it the demands of the soldiers were temporarily appeased." But every crisis of the kind was useful in the cruel game which François d'O was playing, for he meant to demonstrate the impecuniosity of Henry on every possible occasion and to make political capital out of it. He even manœuvred with Henry's mercenaries so as to make their officers declare that unless they were paid well and quickly they would take their services to the Prince of Parma or the League. He had, no doubt, a hand in the Spanish offer, which was to the effect that they would firmly set the crown on Henry's head and beat off all his adversaries if he would agree to their taking Burgundy and Brittany. They were, no doubt, thinking of the disgraceful treaties of Madrid (1526) and Câteau-Cambrésis (1559), and they forgot that Henry of Navarre was neither Francis I nor Henry II.

Eventually, what was called the "Third Party" came into existence in 1592, in which François d'O hastened to join Nevers, Longueville and Villeroi, men who publicly repudiated the idea of Spanish offers, yet were unable to reconcile a heretic King with their tender Catholic consciences. They did not go so far as the League and Mayenne. They certainly were not Royalists with Henry. They soon became known as the "politiques," a nickname as happy as any invented in that curiously repugnant period. Their real object seems to have been to offer the throne to Charles, Cardinal de Bourbon, third son of Louis I, Prince de Condé, and to obtain the Papal dispensation for his marriage with the Infanta, as a kind of sop to Spain's ambition.

A sad blow was dealt to the peculations of François d'O by the entry of Henry into Paris in 1594, for the Governor saw that the countless avenues of illicit profit open during a period of confusion would soon be closed when the King himself took things in hand; and his unctuous warning that the finances would "soon be ruined when soldiers and lawyers had a hand in them" was, no doubt, taken at its true value by Henry and his friends. Another attempt to embarrass the King, this time in his absence, was made by the carefully fostered outbreak against the Jesuits in the same year. François d'O was, naturally, on their side, with the Cardinal de Bourbon, the League, the Pope, and all the strength of Spain; and we may certainly infer that he would have been delighted to compromise the King had any sudden decision been arrived at, contrary to the Jesuits, at a moment inopportune for the exercise of the royal authority. From this the faithful Sully saved his master. He decided that time must be given them either to prove their loyalty or to necessitate their punishment. We can easily realise how he detested François d'O throughout this whole time of danger and disturbance. The economic soul of Sully must have loathed the results of personal extravagance and public dishonesty in a great official even more than it despised the moral character which could produce them. François d'O had touched the limit in both directions. Of his personal vices I need say no more. The luxury of his household was a by-word. He paid for it by such fraudulent appropriations as the larger part of the whole taxation on salt; and in providing means for his own dissipation he cared nothing, says the horrified Sully, about the loss of a town or a fortress to his master.

But all bad things have an end. François d'O had a peculiarly unpleasant ending from a horrible disease in 1594. Before he died, his family and relations had stripped the very walls which sheltered him, "as if," moralises Sully, "Fortune meant to make her last act towards him at least an act of justice." Even his enormous frauds had not been sufficient to pay off his huge expenses. Five-and-twenty bailiffs, says M. de Grillon, were in his house when he died, and they largely feed the surgeon to keep him alive as long as possible. No one else cared. I have often wondered in which room in Château d'O he slept on his few visits to his country house. I should not care to dream in it to-night.

One of his ancestors, Robert d'O, fought in the first Crusade with Robert of Normandy. Another was conspicuous for his valour at the defence of Metz in 1552 by François de Guise against the Emperor Charles V. He left no heir, and the estate was raised to a marquise in 1616 in favour of Alexandre de la Guesle, and then passed to the families of Sorel, Luynes, and Montaigu. Since 1890 it has been owned by General d'Aubigny, who married the daughter of Maréchal Le Bœuf, and in their kindly ownership the best of the early military traditions of the ancient house have worthily been represented. The career of its most notorious owner





143.—THE ARCADE BUILT IN 1505.



provides one more singular comment on the almost continuous tragedy which has followed every Minister of Finance in the Castles of France described in these pages. Fouquet is, of course, the classic instance at Vaux. But the tale goes back as far as Jacques de Beaune at Semblançay, as Bohier at Chenonceaux, and many another. These Ministers managed to leave behind them some of the most splendid specimens of architecture in France, Azay-le-Rideau among them. But none of them was quite as unredeemed in scoundrelism as François d'O ; and I cannot help a repetition of the thought that in the bizarre mass of jumbled pinnacles and uneven roofs of his old home you see some curious reflection of the disordered mind and unbridled licence of the most corrupt Court in Europe.



144.—THE EASTERN FACADE, BUILT IN 1770.

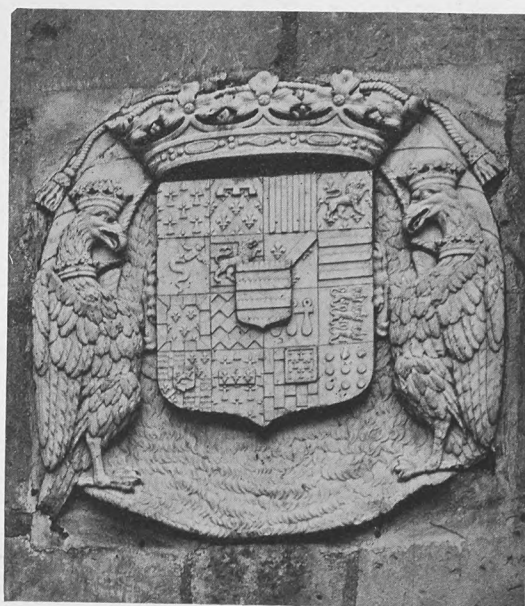


CHAPTER X.

MONTREUIL-BELLAY MAINE-ET-LOIRE.\*

**S**OUTH of Saumur and west of Fontevrault, the Castle of Montreuil-Bellay rises above the banks of the Thouet guarding the south-eastern barriers of the capital of Anjou. In the more modern geographical nomenclature of France it stands at the meeting-point of Maine-et-Loire with Vienne and Les-Deux-Sèvres. So fine a strategical position, and so magnificent a site above the river, was evidently appreciated by its earliest builders in a way that makes it more difficult than ever for me to believe the prevalent artistic jargon about the absence of all "sense of landscape" before the sixteenth (and some say even the seventeenth) century. The exquisitely appropriate setting of many ruins far older than 1500 can never be explained to my satisfaction solely by the theory that military buildings were set down where strategy demanded and peaceful abbeys where the monks could readily catch fish. The earliest Montreuil, as we shall see, combined both characteristics, and its site provides for the necessities of each. But there is a grandeur in its development which implies not merely the appreciation of natural beauty, but the knowledge how to make the most of it as well; and so clearly has this sentiment survived that, though Montreuil is now a conglomeration of various architectural ages, the whole has become blended into a strong and satisfying unity which seems only to accentuate the essential dignity of the original conception.

In the series appearing in these pages I have endeavoured to treat each Castle as the frame for a separate portrait, whenever that was possible; and this method has been chosen not merely because it is difficult now to take the same view of things as was possible twenty years ago, but because most of these places have, during that interval, received considerably more attention than was the case when I had the joy of seeing them for the first time; and it is now easily possible for anyone who may be interested in these sketches to go far more deeply into their architectural or historical details than I have space to do here. In Montreuil-Bellay it is somewhat more difficult than usual to choose the central figure in so long and vast a mass of history; but, since contrast is a good thing in this as in other matters, I have chosen one of Montreuil's later châtelaines, Mme. de Longueville, the sister of the great Condé and one of the heroines of the early Fronde who took refuge here in 1653 from the somewhat hectic agitations of contemporary politics; and since the story of so frail and fair a lady seems slightly inappropriate to the feudal towers and buttresses with which this essay opens, I shall postpone a more detailed consideration of her gallantries to the later pages, with which will be found some illustrations of the furniture and interior fittings of her time. It is somewhat curious to realise that though Montreuil was visited by Louis VIII (1224), Charles VII (1437), Louis XI (on several occasions), Charles VIII (1488 and 1490) and Louis XIII (1620), none of these monarchs has left so lasting an impression as did Anne-Geneviève de Bourbon; and though such noble families as those of Bellay (1030), Melun (1220), Harcourt (1415), Meilleraye, Cossé-Brissac,



145.—THE ARMS OF HARCOURT AND PONTHEU.

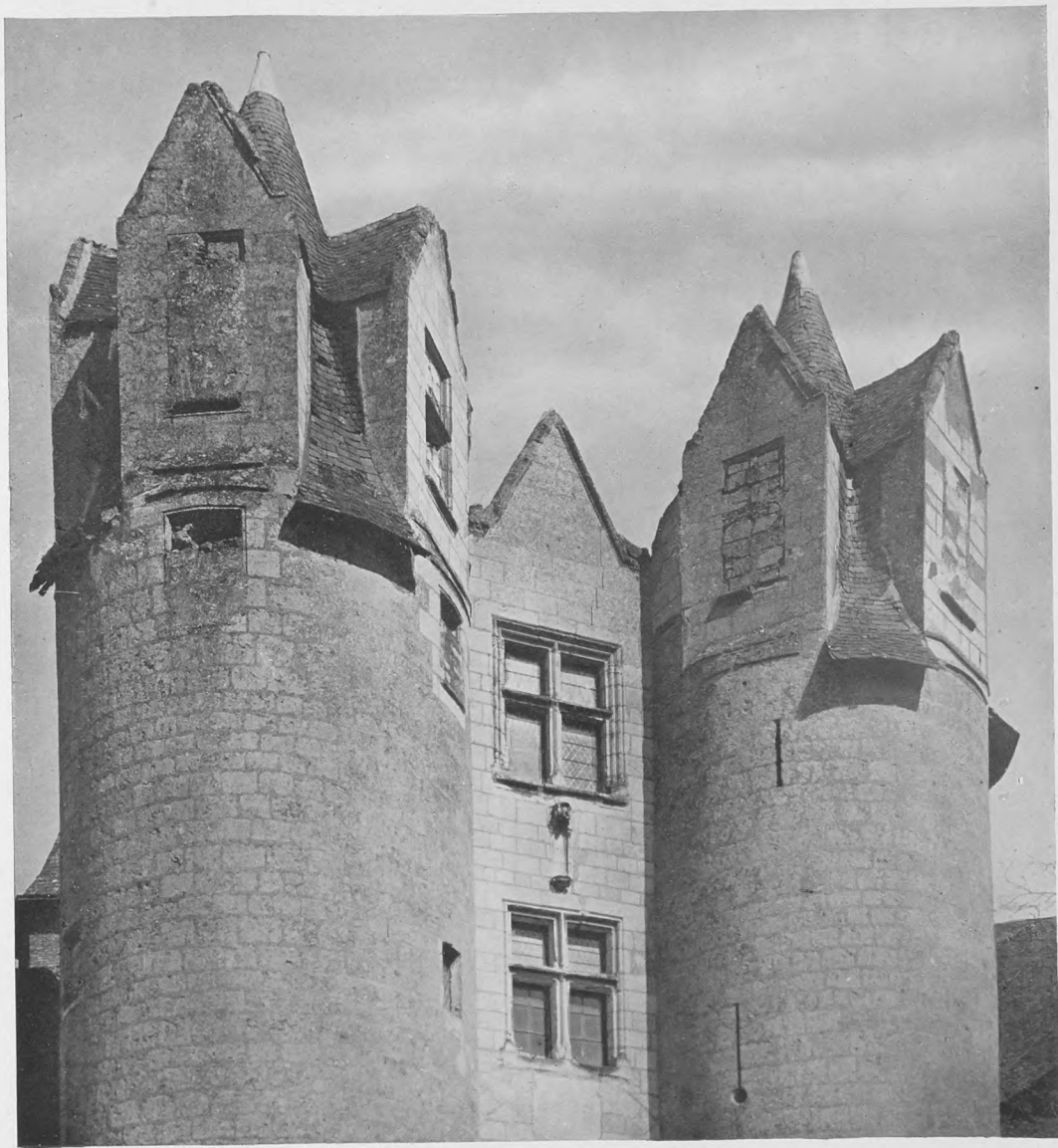
\* The Property of Baron Georges Charles Millin de Grandmaison.



and Trémouille (1760) had in turn inhabited the Castle before its present owners came there, it is with the Longuevilles (1488) that the place is most closely connected in the memories of France and England. Something may now be said of the traditions handed on to them by their predecessors, and by them transmitted in 1756 to Jean-Charles Godefroy de la Trémouille, Duc de Thouars and Prince of Taranto, whose descendants sold it in 1822 to M. Nivelteau, father-in-law of the Baron Millin de Grandmaison.

The Castle holds the north-eastern corner of the town, above the river Thouet, which flows from Secondigny, in the Deux-Sèvres, and joins the Loire at Saumur. Like an advanced post of the citizens' houses behind it, the rampart of Montreuil-Bellay now stands more free from their encroaching masonry than was the case in older and more dangerous days, and consequently, its various buildings group themselves in a finer and more spacious perspective than formerly, and the loss entailed by the practical disappearance of so much of the moats or drawbridges is

thus almost compensated. What that loss has meant elsewhere is perhaps most visible at Chambord, where the huge towers squat on the level plain with a top-heavy appearance that is even more emphasised by the Brobdingnagian flourishes of their roofs and chimneys. But if you look at the old sixteenth century prints you will see that these same towers once rose proudly from the encircling waters of a moat so deep that the true sweep and proportion of their massive masonry had its full effect. A similar improvement, on a smaller scale, has just become visible at Hampton Court, where visitors are now able to admire the actual depth of the walls on each side of the main entrance, since the moat



146.—TURRETS OF THE GRAND CHATELET.

has been entirely dug out again and the old bridge rebuilt. The reverse process, and one more comparable with Montreuil-Bellay, may be studied in Paris on the modern Parvis of Notre Dame, which once rose out of a confused mass of houses many of which actually touched the walls of their Salvation. Such crowded conditions may certainly have stimulated that peculiarly soaring grace of French cathedrals which is combined with a boldness in the treatment of detail in high places, necessitated when the lower portion of the walls became so rapidly encumbered with alien excrescences. But there is no doubt that the Notre Dame we know, standing free in its own space, gives a far better opportunity of appreciation for its designer's work; and it may be noted that our English cathedrals, built in a country which enjoyed domestic peace far earlier than her turbulent neighbours, nearly all stand, like Salisbury, in the midst of a fair lawn, or, like Durham—one of the most splendid sites

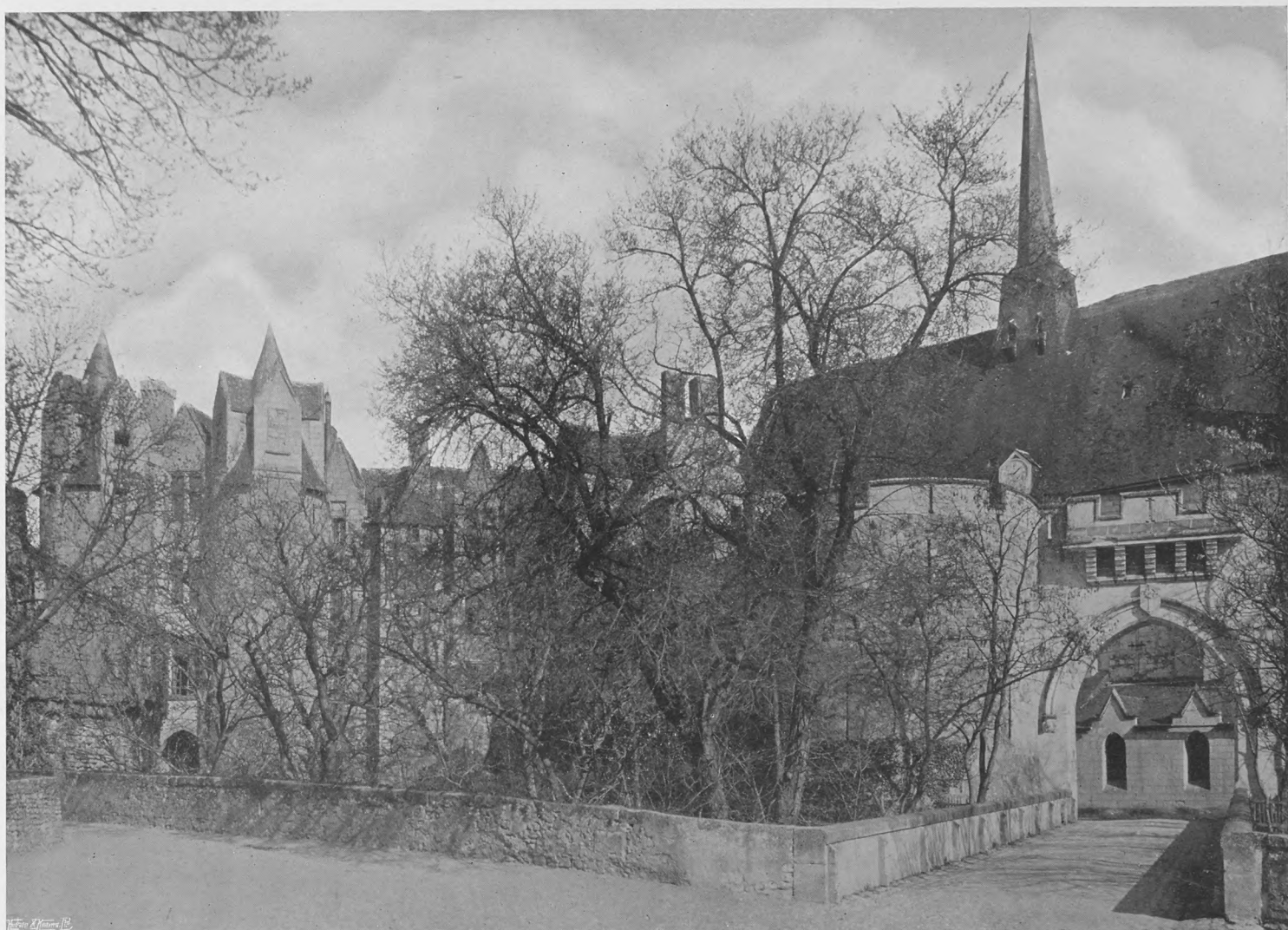




147.—THE CHURCH AND THE CHATEAU FROM THE RIVER THOUET.



in all the world—upon a rock above a river. So stood the earliest castle on the bend of the Thouet when the first Bellay, from whom it took its earliest name, was granted it in fief by Fulk Nerra, that great castle-builder, after he had taken Saumur in about 1030. Bellay's wife, Grécie, having borne him three sons, of whom the youngest became Archbishop of Rheims, married Geoffrey Martel, Count of Anjou, but died, in a convent, of shame at his ill-treatment of her. By this time the little monastery founded by her first husband had become famous enough to suggest that Montreuil (Monasteriolum) should be combined with Bellay to form the full title by which the spot was henceforth to be known, and to be distinguished from the many other Montreuils (no doubt of similar origin) in different parts of France. The memory of this sacred nucleus is preserved in the building, still called "The Monks' Lodgings" in the Castle of to-day; and round their tiny predecessor the first Bellays reared their massive donjon keeps and dug their moats. So much, in fact, did

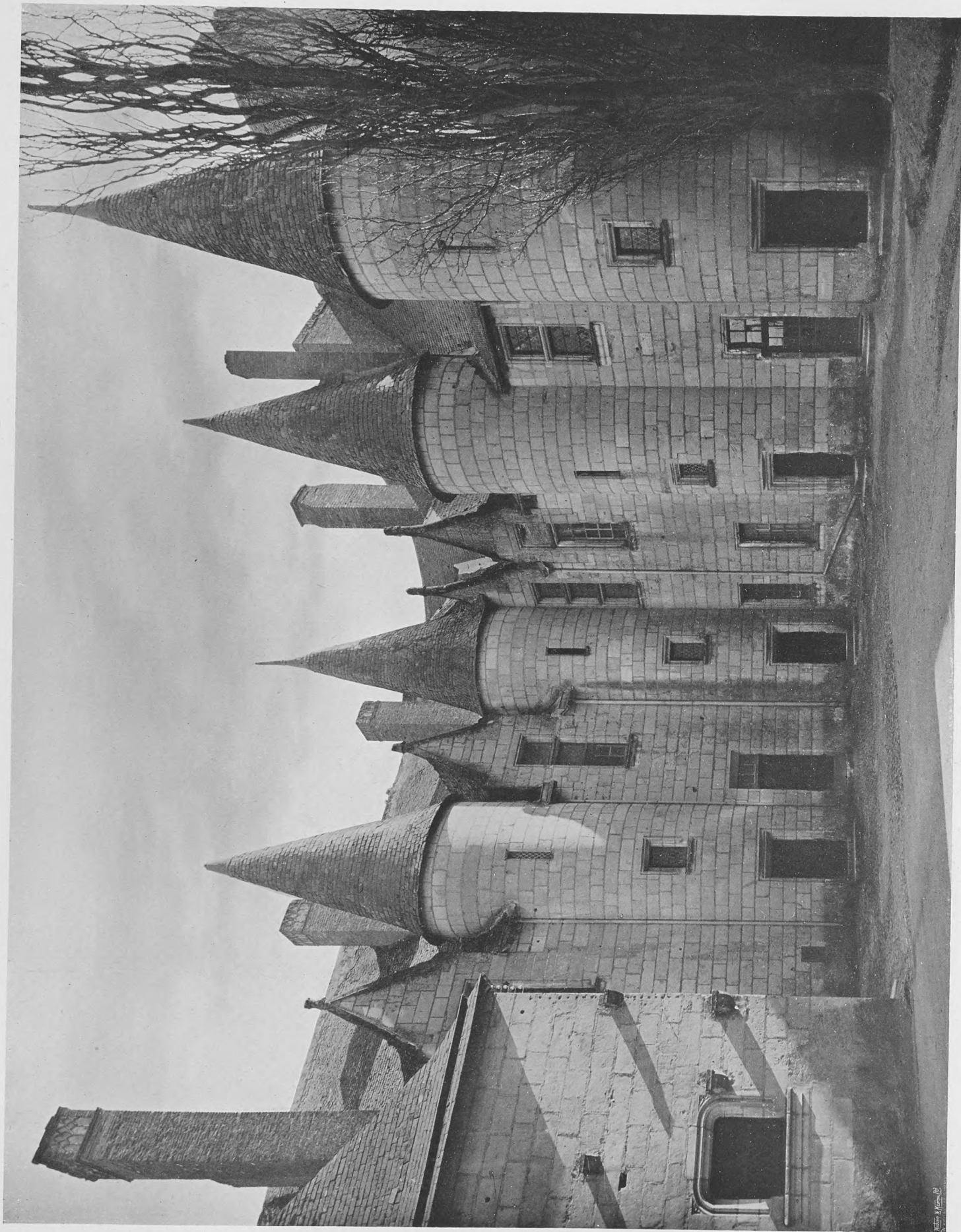


148.—ENTRANCE TO THE HARCOURT CHATEAU.

they believe in their security that they roused a revolt among the barons of the Western marches against no less a chieftain than the hot-blooded Geoffrey Plantagenet, son of our Henry II. For a whole year Montreuil-Bellay was besieged and the surrounding country devastated, and it surrendered to superior forces in 1151. In the early decades of the next century it had passed, by the marriage of the heiress Agnes, to William of Melun, and to her hospitality came King Louis VIII in 1224.

One of her descendants, another William of Melun, followed St. Louis to the Crusades in 1270, with three banners and twelve knights, at a payment of five thousand livres and his provisions from the King's own commissariat. In 1316 the heiress of another noble family added the lands of Tancarville to those of Melun and Montreuil, and Jean de Melun, richer than any of his forbears, was able to fight under the Royal standard of Jean de Poitiers and win the high post of Great Chamberlain of France, a dignity to which he added a great reputation as a captain in the field. His office passed to a son of the same name and title who was made



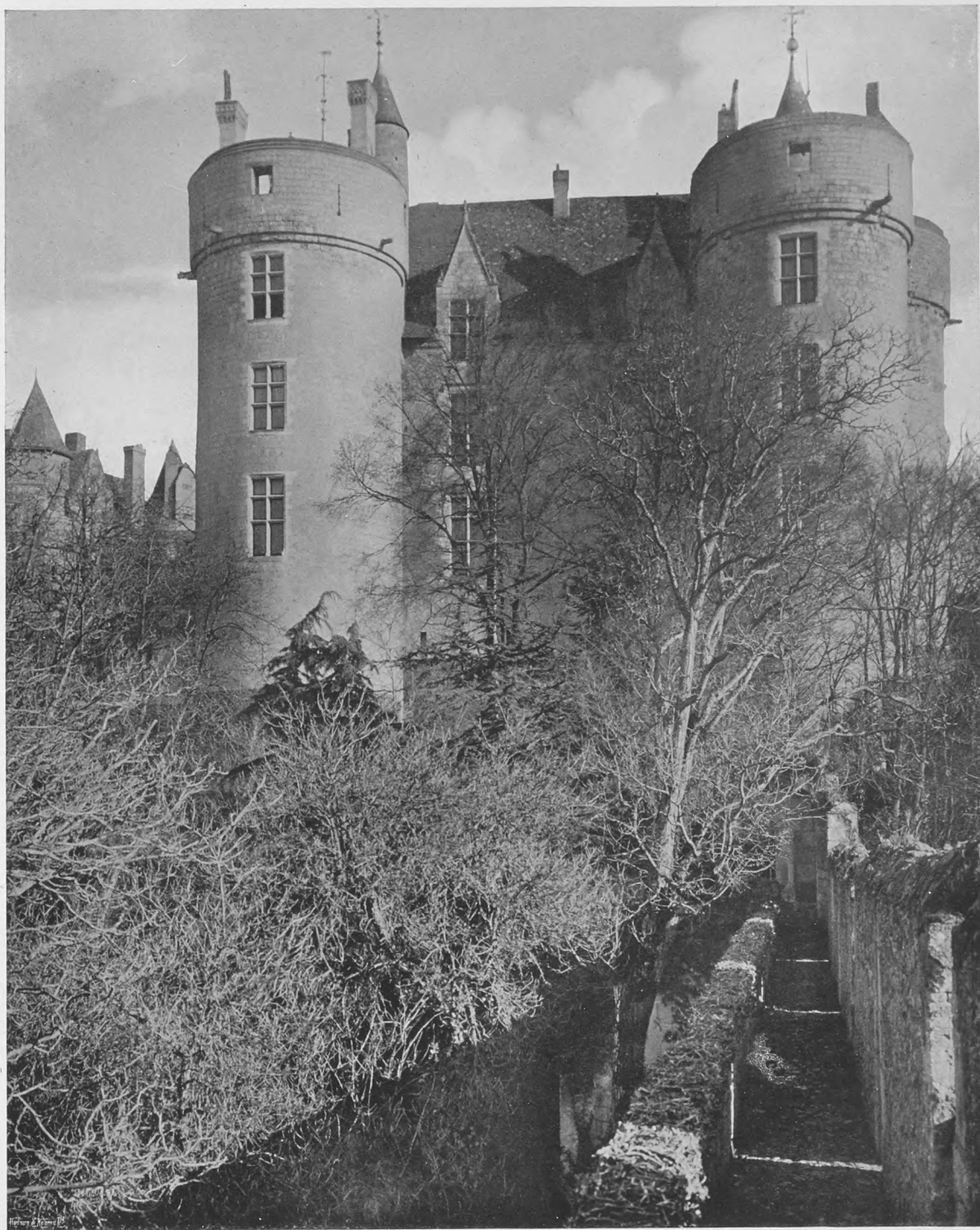


149.—THE “PETIT CHATEAU.”



Governor of Burgundy, Champagne and Brie, a combination which perhaps did not possess quite the same succulent significance as it does now, but was clearly the origin of both wealth and influence, for by 1353 he had become the King's Lieutenant in Brittany as well, and his Royal master had more than recompensed him for the heavy ransom necessitated by a temporary captivity with the English forces. In 1359 he crossed the Channel to England itself as confidential envoy for the French King John, then himself our prisoner; and in a miniature preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale he is depicted bringing back the answer of the French Princes to King Edward, whose annoyance has been sufficiently indicated in Froissart's lively

phrases. At the time of this capable nobleman's death, in 1385, it is recorded in the archives of Montreuil that, as one of the most powerful Seigneurs of Anjou, he had no fewer than one hundred and twenty-nine fiefs for which homage was rendered, in addition to his patronage as Vicomte of Thouars. In 1388 his son, the fourth William in the title, went in the Royal suite to Germany with Charles V, and he is picked out by Christine de Pisan as in the front rank of the best gentlemen of France. The diplomatic qualities he evidently inherited and improved were displayed in England, in 1393, over the negotiations for peace; at Avignon, in 1395, where he



150.—FROM THE BRIDGE IN THE PARK.

interviewed the Pope on the burning questions of the Schism; in Genoa, next year, where he took possession in the name of the King; and in Cyprus, where he negotiated a treaty of alliance. He was a Privy Councillor and first President of the Cour des Comptes, a kind of primitive Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was due to his efforts that the town of Montreuil was surrounded by the fortified wall, of which several traces still remain. His wife, of the powerful and noble house of Parthenay, was well worthy of her lord; and it was through her daughter, the heiress Margaret, that his great possessions eventually passed to the celebrated family of the Harcourts, one of whom, before his death at Cressy, had married an Isabeau de Parthenay.



The Harcourts had been brilliantly connected with the best blood in France almost from the earliest days of their emergence into fame in Normandy ; but John (VI) flew at yet higher game when in 1350 he married Catherine de Bourbon, sister-in-law of Charles V. It was his nephew, James, who married Marguerite de Melun, and thus added Montreuil-Bellay to his



151.—CHATEAU VIEUX : LE GRAND CHATELET.

own inheritance. Already Baron de Montgomery, Comte de Saint Paul, and Seigneur de Noyelles, this James Harcourt was Constable of France in 1411, and fought with desperate bravery at Agincourt, where he was taken prisoner. No sooner had he contrived his release than he hastened to relieve Rouen. With two thousand men he attempted to create a sufficient



diversion, by an attack on the English lines, to give time for a successful sally from the beleaguered town; for Henry V might well have imagined that this comparatively small force was but the vanguard of the Royalist army that had so long promised help to Rouen in her bitter straits. But Harcourt's men were repulsed and he was himself taken prisoner. He may have been present at that piteous scene in the great hall of the Chartreuse de la Rose outside the city, where the young English King, with the cold, impassive, handsome countenance that seemed to bear the prophecy of early death, listened to the starving Ambassadors of hunger-stricken Rouen, beneath the tapestry that bore the ominous device "*Jamais.*" Upon



152.—GRAND STAIRWAY TO THE CHATEAU NEUF.

January 20th, 1419, the town surrendered after having suffered the ultimate horrors of privation and distress. James Harcourt had, no doubt, been the more anxious to assist it because his relative, John, had just previously been Captain of its Castle, and another Harcourt had been Archbishop of a See which was in the centre of that family's original possessions. He had then been married scarcely a year to Marguerite de Melun at Montreuil, and he spent nearly all the rest of his life in fighting the English or their partisans, until he was slain beneath the walls of Parthenay in 1428. His valour was inherited, with his titles, by his son William; and his daughter,

Marie, married Jean, "the bastard of Orleans," Count of Dunois and Longueville.

This William proved himself a brilliant soldier at Montereau-sur-Yonne, at Pontoise, Caen, Falaise, Cherbourg and wherever his hereditary enemies, the English, were to be found during the reign of Charles VII, the best tribute to his worth being his selection by that very perfect, gentle knight, René of Anjou, as one of his executors. After the death of his first wife, Perronelle d'Amboise, he married Yolande de Laval, daughter of the Baron de Vitré, and it was for her, apparently, that he designed the splendid fifteenth century castle which still survives the older feudal fortress of his ancestors. On the left of the great gateway is a very curious square



building, which was originally a kitchen, and on the right, in the court of honour, are the Vieux Château, which has two fine spiral staircases in the towers at each end, with brickwork above the masonry at their summits, and the collegiate chapel, which contains a remarkable heraldic mosaic commemorating the descent and the alliances of the famous house of Harcourt. Its vaulting recalls that of St. Etienne at Chinon, one of the finest fifteenth century naves on the Loire, built about twenty years before. The sanctuary of Montreuil had hardly been completed when Count William was carried into it to burial, and his widow, Yolande, piously completed both the chapel and the Château Neuf which her beloved and brilliant husband had begun. She had more than her fair share of sorrow, for after her elder daughter, Marguerite, had died within a few weeks of her betrothal to René d'Alençon, Jeanne, her second daughter, now the heiress, had been betrothed to René de Lorraine, son of Ferry de Vaudemont and Yolande,



153.—ANCIENT ROOFS.

daughter of the good King René. But at the death of Count William the betrothal was repudiated on the ground that Jeanne was deformed and incapable of bearing children. The blow was a bitter one both to mother and daughter, and they died (1487-8) soon afterwards, within twelve months of one another, whereby the lands and castle of Montreuil came to François d'Orléans, son of the famous Dunois and of Marie, the daughter of that James Harcourt already mentioned at the siege of Rouen. Close by the square kitchen, which I spoke of just now, and on its western side, is a little building called the "Petit Château," with a staircase at its back, and four round towers half engaged in the walls from which they spring. Each has its own spiral staircase and conical roof of slate, and here tradition assigns the dwelling of the canons of the collegiate chapel.

Before I begin the story of the most celebrated of Dunois' successors, I must suggest something of the life which the Châtelaines of Montreuil lived in that castle, which remained,



in its essentials, almost untouched by the Renaissance, and preserved for the fragile heroine of the Fronde a fortress more fitted for the brilliant soldiers who spent their lives fighting the English captains than for the somewhat anæmic intrigues of the politicians of Louis XIII and Louis XIV. It happens that, in a book so little known that I need not here designate it by a more particular title than the "Victorial," an almost perfect picture of castle life in the fifteenth century has been preserved for us by the sympathetic pen of a contemporary squire-at-arms. He gives us a singularly convincing picture of ordered beauty and aristocratic calm, filling in his background with such gracious details as the minstrels and musicians in the private chapel; the pleasant orchards and gardens by the stream; the lake that could be drained at will to choose the best fishes for the Seigneur's table; the five-and-forty sporting dogs and the men who cleaned their kennels; the long rows of great horses in the spacious stables; or the falcons on their perches with their keepers at their side. He even suggests to us the way My Lady spent



154.—MONTREUIL-BELLAY FROM THE RIVER.

her quiet days; how she went forth from her bedchamber in the morning, with the ten maids-in-waiting, to her favourite shrubbery, wherein they all sat silently and watched her at her rosary and her Book of Hours; how they filled up the time till Mass by picking flowers; how they had breakfast, after Mass, on chickens and roasted game served on silver with a flagon of red wine; how they rode out together, as merry as a flight of song-birds, in the early afternoon, taking with them what gentlemen were there and laughing till the fields re-echoed as with the mirth of Paradise; and how the minstrels played in the great dining-hall at evening, until My Lady paced upstairs to bed again, with torches borne before her and her maidens following after.

The sixteenth century was soon to introduce a greater vivacity, a wider variety of pleasures. In 1512, Montreuil passed to Louis d'Orléans, whose son Claud was killed at Pavia, where "all was lost save honour," and Madrid left very little, even of that, to the vanquished King Francis I. Another Louis d'Orléans then became Captain of Montreuil, who married (1534)





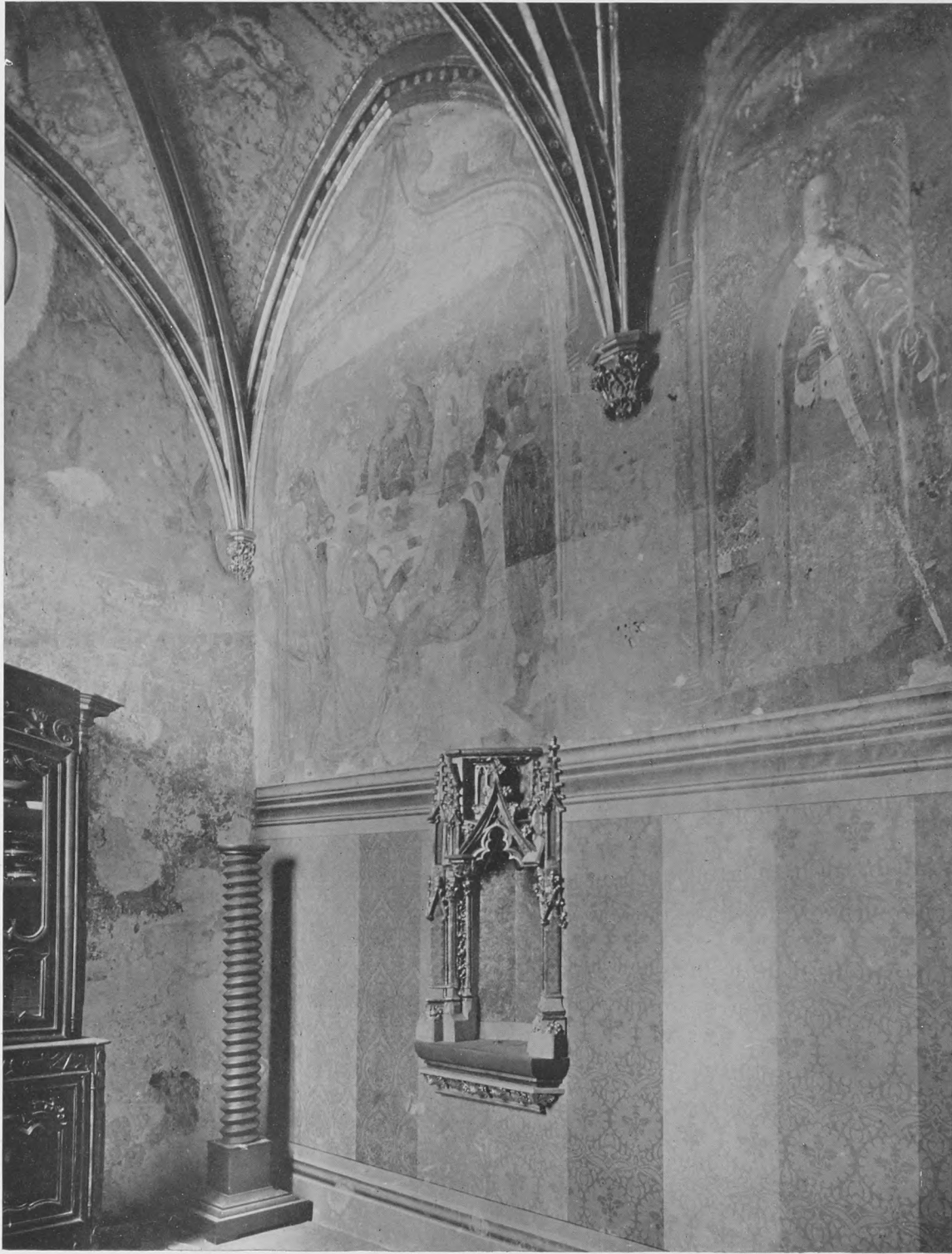
155.—THE CHATEAU NEUF.



Marie, the daughter of Claud of Lorraine, Duc of Guise, and Antoinette de Bourbon. At his death, his widow (who lived till 1560) married James V of Scotland and became the mother of Mary Queen of Scots. By so curious a link is Montreuil-Bellay connected with the story of Great Britain and with the King who first joined upon one throne the crowns of Scotland and of England more than three hundred years ago.

In 1551 the estate had passed to a cousin out of the direct line, Léonor d'Orléans, duc de Longueville, Great Chamberlain of France, who was taken prisoner at the battle of St. Quentin

in 1557, and married Marie de Bourbon, a lady whose Royal connections united with his distinguished ancestry and loyal services to obtain him from Charles IX the title of a Prince of the Blood. It was the terrible hour of the Religious Wars, and while the town of Montreuil was occupied by one part of the Huguenot forces, the Captain of its Castle was engaged in putting to flight another on the field of Montcontour. In 1589 Henry of Navarre, on his march against Henri III at Tours, took Montreuil-Bellay with the other Royalist or Catholic fortresses which lay in his path. Léonor d'Orléans had died some sixteen years before; his son, Henri d'Orléans, duc de Longueville,



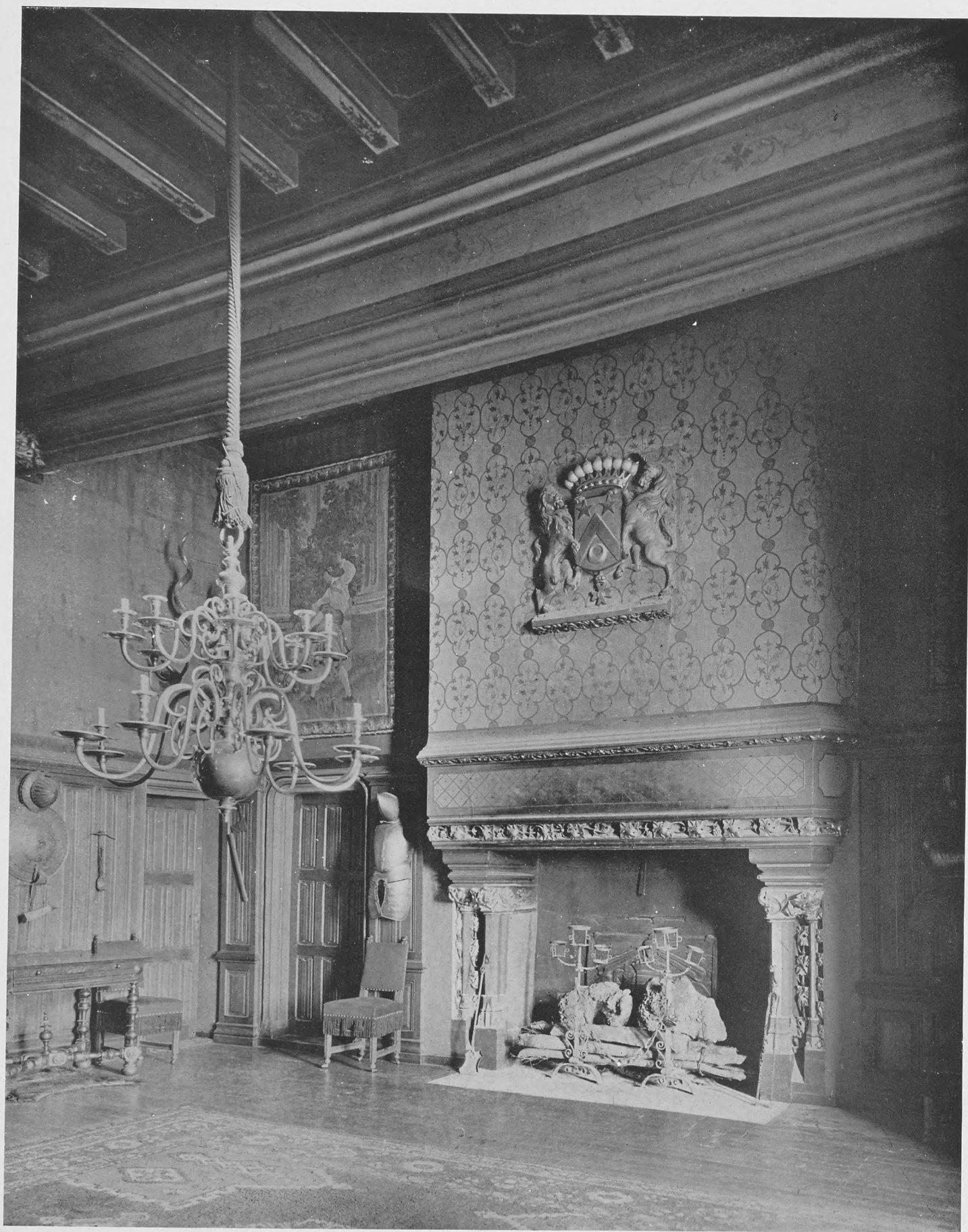
156.—LA CHAPELLE.

deserted his father's side and fought for the "Panache Blanche" against the League. He fell mortally wounded at Asnières in 1595, the same year in which his wife, Catherine of Gonzaga, gave birth to a son, Henri, duc de Longueville, who became one of the leaders of the first "Fronde."

Cardinal de Retz has left us one of his inimitable sketches of this Henri de Longueville. "The new owner of Montreuil," he writes, "enjoyed the splendid name of Orléans, and he was vivacious, generous and just, a man, in fact, of high worth. But he never went very far



because his ideas invariably outran his capacity." A less literary critic probably gives us a more truthful portrait when he says that "Henri d'Orléans, duc de Longueville, was a man of common appearance without a trace of fascination, though he could be witty and businesslike



157.—FIREPLACE, SALLE A MANGER.

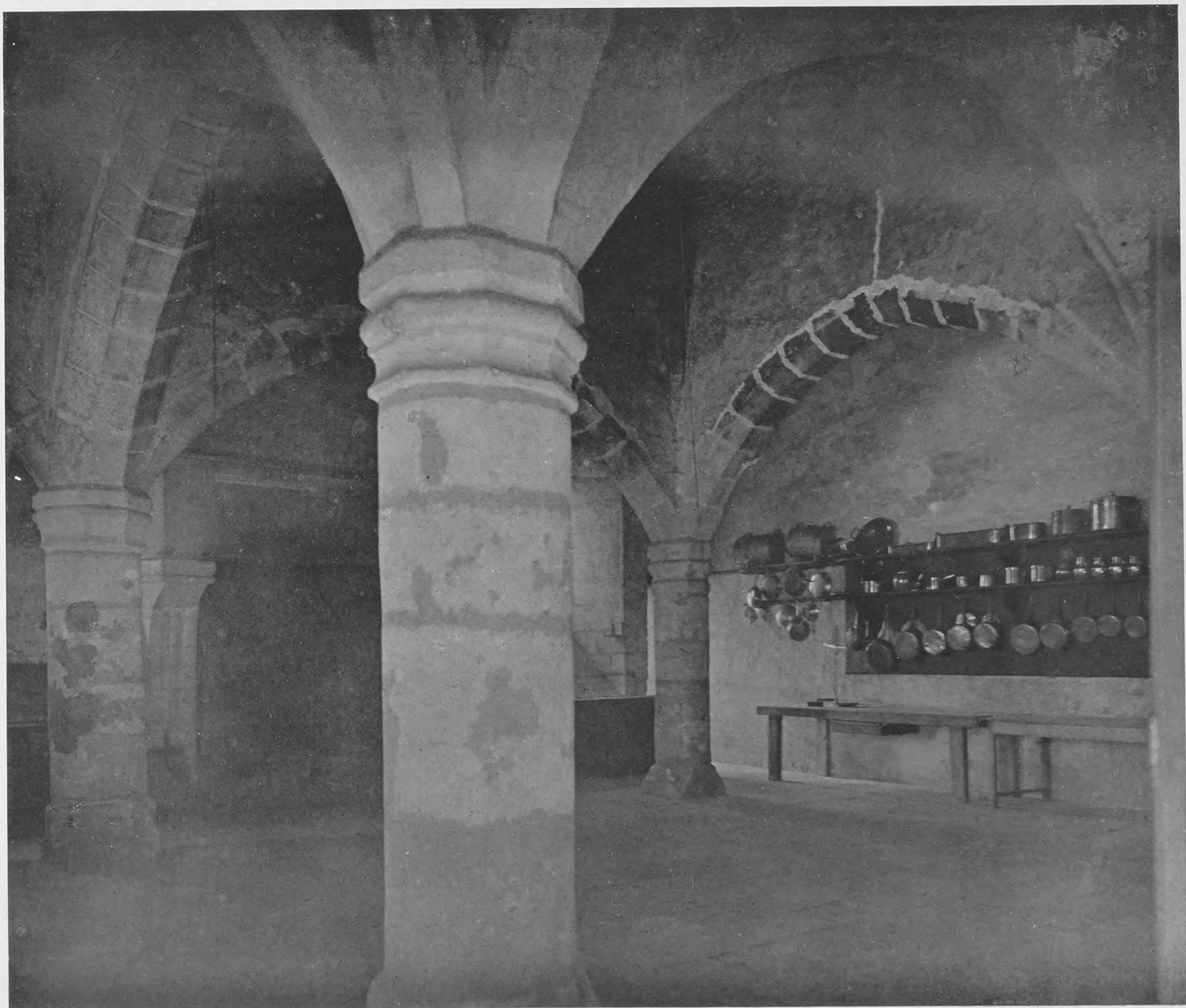
enough when he liked. But he was fonder of idleness than of action, and only joined 'the discontented party' from the wish to please his wife." This is the lady, Anne Geneviève de Bourbon, who was the daughter of the second Henri, Prince of Condé, and the sister of Louis, the Grand Condé, as he was always called, whose gorgeous reception of Louis XIV in 1671 I



shall describe in connection with Chantilly. The only son of the last of his line, the Duc d'Enghien, was murdered by Napoleon in 1804.

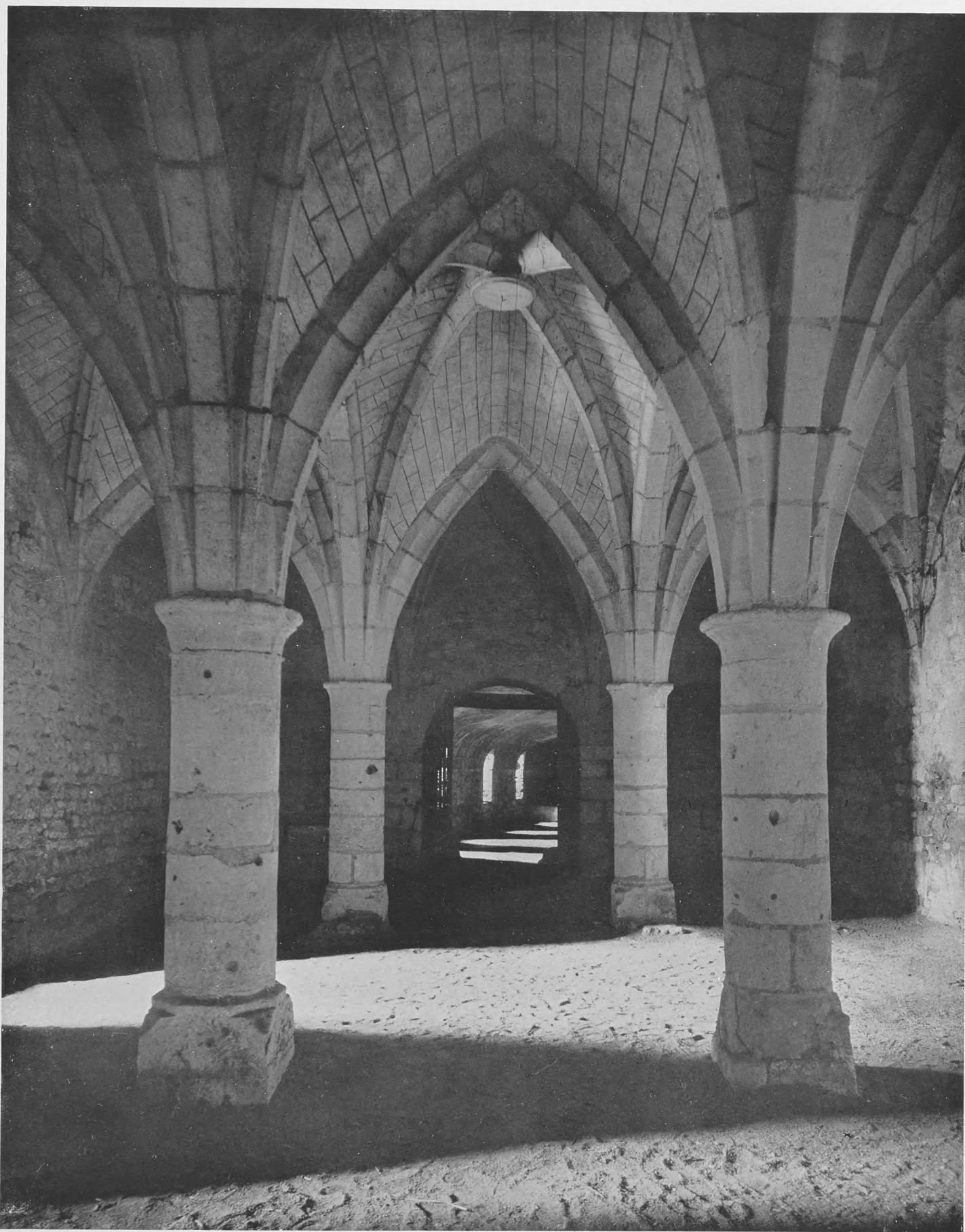
But for the second marriage of Henri Quatre the crown of France would have come to Louis de Bourbon, Duc d'Enghien, afterwards Prince de Condé. He never forgot it, and it explains much of his history. In 1641 his father, always finding it advisable to be a friend of Richelieu, married him off to the great Cardinal's niece, Clémence de Brézé, who was afterwards imprisoned at Châteauroux in consequence of one of those scandals too frequently associated, in several generations, with the name she bore. His sister, Anne Geneviève, was nearly married to his wife's brother, in order, apparently, to make the tie still stronger. But Richelieu knew when he had enough, and in 1642 the lovely Mlle. de Bourbon wedded, with much pomp and ceremony, the unpleasant little widower of forty-seven, le Duc de Longueville, Governor of Normandy and Seigneur of Montreuil-Bellay, who already rejoiced in a daughter of equally unattractive manners, and who was the avowed and published lover of Mme. de Montbazon. It is not difficult to imagine the result. But to realise something of the rôle she and her brother took in politics, I must say something of the larger stage on which they played their parts, beyond the valley of the Thouet, to which she only came when nothing more interesting was open to her.

She had been married scarcely a year before the death of both Richelieu and Louis XIII. They were replaced by Mazarin and the boy who was to be Louis XIV, and the new *régime* started with the brilliant victory of Rocroy, for which her brother (only twenty-two years old) was given all the credit by a delighted nation. France loves nothing better than a military hero.



158.—MONTREUIL-BELLAY KITCHEN.





159.—CELLARS OR CRYPT.

In the proud, brave, resolute young captain, who blended Bourbon and Montmorency in his fighting blood, and showed his natural courage and tenacity in his eagle glance, France found the hero she desired. She was also, unfortunately, to find that at a later period it would be necessary to depose him from the pedestal. But she only seized the opportunity to show the boundless generosity of her forgiveness. To the victor of Rocroy everything was permissible, everything was pardoned.

If the battle had only thrown its lustre on the youthful years of the handsome prince who was to become the "Roi Soleil," all might yet have been well. Unfortunately, it lent prestige



to Mazarin and the Queen-Regent; and with it the reign of charlatanry and the "war of women" began their fatal course. Beaufort, the puppet of Mme. de Montbazon, was so ill-advised as to annoy the victor of Rocroy and his sister at the very moment of their highest popularity. Mme. de Montbazon was even so ill-advised as to attempt to fasten proofs of an intrigue with Coligny upon our fair Duchesse de Longueville. She failed. But it was ominous that there were many who openly supported her from sheer boredom at the haughtiness of the house of Condé or from downright disgust with Mazarin. The fact is that the house of Condé, having taken the governorship of Burgundy as "the spoils of the Montmorencies" under Richelieu, secured both Berry and Champagne under Mazarin and Normandy under Longueville. Their general was the only general in France who had either an army worth the name or a commissariat worth anything. The story of Rocroy is that of Fribourg (1644),



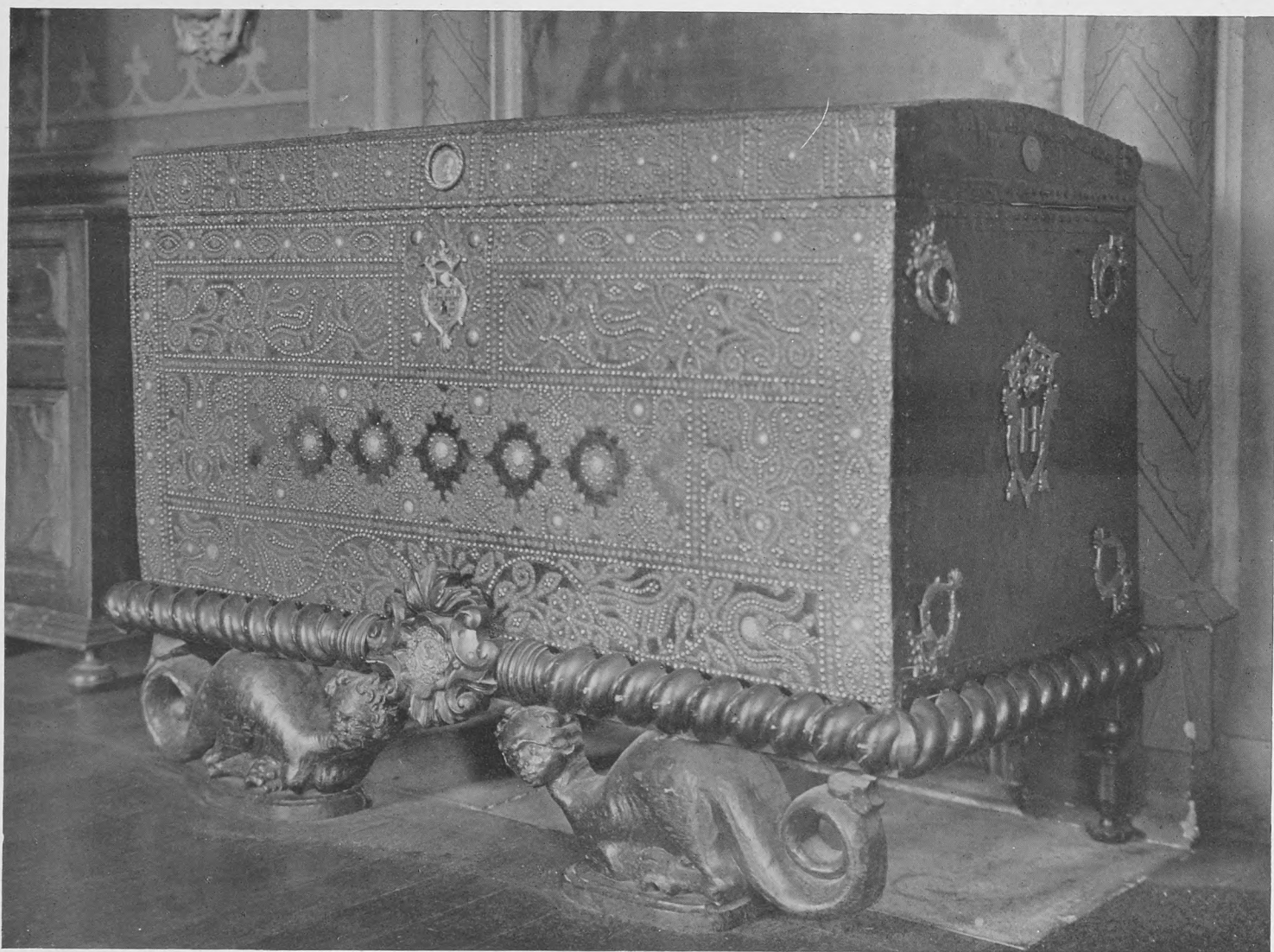
160.—CHAMBRE DE LOUIS XIII.

Nordlingen (1645), and Lens (1648). They were won by persistent frontal attacks at an enormous cost of blood and treasure. They were the annual military success necessary to impress upon the people the success of the Government and the valour of the aristocracy. But there was not much left to impress the aristocracy themselves. They knew the machinery behind the scenes. They played their cards round a throne without a king; and their constant "revolutions" are called by one name—the Fronde. While their men were fighting theatrical battles in the open, and their women were intriguing on the backstairs, the real work of governing the nation was being carried on by the magistrates and the "middle-class" officials. The rise of Jansenism, that feeble echo of Calvin and of Luther, only gave another opportunity for the weakening of established principles. Retz looked on at it all, made his own profit where he could, and laughed at everyone. His memoirs typify the best thing the Fronde



produced, because they were prophetic of that new, supple, logical French language which henceforth made its appearance and took the place of the sonority and pompousness of an earlier tongue.

In the meanwhile the young King had to escape out of his own capital (January, 1649) with his mother. The people had grown tired of it all. They had resorted to their barricades; a rough-and-ready remedy, but usually an effective one. Paris was actually for some three months besieged by Condé. Like his sister, Mme. de Longueville, he seemed to consider himself outside all laws, in some divine Empyrean where he could never be called to account for any action. The enormous estates and territorial influence of his family made some counterpoise an absolute necessity. Mazarin provided it with no fewer than seven nieces, who suddenly all appeared upon the scene at once and were married to the Vendômes, the Duc d'Épernon and others. Condé did not exactly show the talents of a politician. At last



161.—MONTREUIL-BELLAY: ANCIENT MARRIAGE COFFER.

(January 18th, 1650) the Queen and Mazarin summoned all their courage and imprisoned both Condé and his brother. Mme. de Longueville was only too glad to be able to escape. De Retz and Mlle. de Chevreuse reigned for the time in Paris, and early in 1651 Condé was offered the hand of this somewhat damaged young lady as the price of freedom. It seemed as if there were nothing left but petticoats in France. Condé himself came out of prison exactly as he had entered. It taught him nothing.

I have spoken of the rise of the new French language at this time. Many writers seem to think that the Fronde was nothing but a literary event, full of witty sayings, illuminated by the grace of clever ladies. The reality was very different. While tragedy seemed to shadow the very steps of Condé, the country itself was full of misery, of famine, of disease. Through it all rode these sinister gallants at the heels of women as reckless of the nation's weal as they were careless of their own honour. Mme. de Longueville, with her two brothers and



La Rochefoucauld, roused the South against the Queen, and the extraordinary mind of Condé actually welcomed as allies the Spaniards he had beaten in the field. He got yet another unexpected ally in Mlle. de Montpensier, "La Grande Mademoiselle," as she was called, the richest heiress in France, who was ready to marry Louis XIV, Condé, or any other prince of sufficient dignity to match her own importance. But the unnatural alliance broke to pieces before the advancing forces of the Queen and Mazarin. Condé, in despair, attacked Paris itself. He was responsible for the horrible and treacherous attack on the Hôtel de Ville, and for the bloodshed which followed. "La Grande Mademoiselle" alone just managed to save him from the results of "the most brutal act since monarchy was founded," as Omer Talon rightly called it. He left the capital, and one might imagine that he was disgraced for ever. Far from it. The feast of Chantilly shows how he recovered. But the Fronde was over at last. Mme. de Longueville, after the taking of Bordeaux by the Royal troops, was fairly at her wits' end where to go. The Count and her husband packed her off to Montreuil-Bellay. "I sent her," writes Mlle. de Montpensier, "a gentleman with my compliments, and offered all the help I could." She reached her retreat in October, 1653, and consoled herself as well as she could with occasional visits from Richelieu's nephew or from Mlle. de Vertus.

"She had a certain languor," writes de Retz, "which was more touching and more successful than the brilliancy of ladies who were even lovelier than she. Her mind and temperament were much the same, for she startled you with a sudden flash of wit or passion that was surprising in one who seemed so calm. Her faults were really few, save in the way of gallantry. But that ruined her, for she was obliged to give politics the place next to her affections, and so, instead of being a heroine, she became a mere adventuress."

Mme. de Sévigné tells us (June, 1672) how Mlle. de Vertus broke the news of her son's death. Mme. de Longueville had taken refuge in religion when the "angelic beauty" and the "turquoise eyes" of her youth first began to fade. The sad news of young Longueville's death seems to have nearly broken his mother's heart. He was, in fact, her son by M. de la Rochefoucauld, the author of the famous "Maxims," who mourned the loss of him as much as she did.

In 1662 her husband sold Montreuil-Bellay to Charles de la Porte, Duc de la Meilleraye, Marshal of France, who married Marie de Cossé-Brissac, the eventual heiress. His son took the title of Duc de Mazarin on marrying Hortense Mancini. The estate passed from the house of Cossé-Brissac to that of la Trémouille in 1756, and from this latter was confiscated at the Revolution, when the castle was first used as a prison and then adjudged to a merchant named Augustin Glacin, who was unable to complete the purchase, and it was finally sold by the last of the Trémouilles to M. Nivelteau, whose daughter married the Baron Millin de Grandmaison, ancestor of the present owner, a grandson of Marshal Lobau and a great-nephew of General Grandjean. By his care and by the skill of M. Joly-Leterme, an architect of Saumur, the castle has been preserved in all its pristine splendour, and the furniture is worthy of its splendid rooms. In very few places, even in that historic land, is it possible to trace so clear a descent, from one owner to the other, of a great house which has held so large a place in the history of France for at least nine centuries.

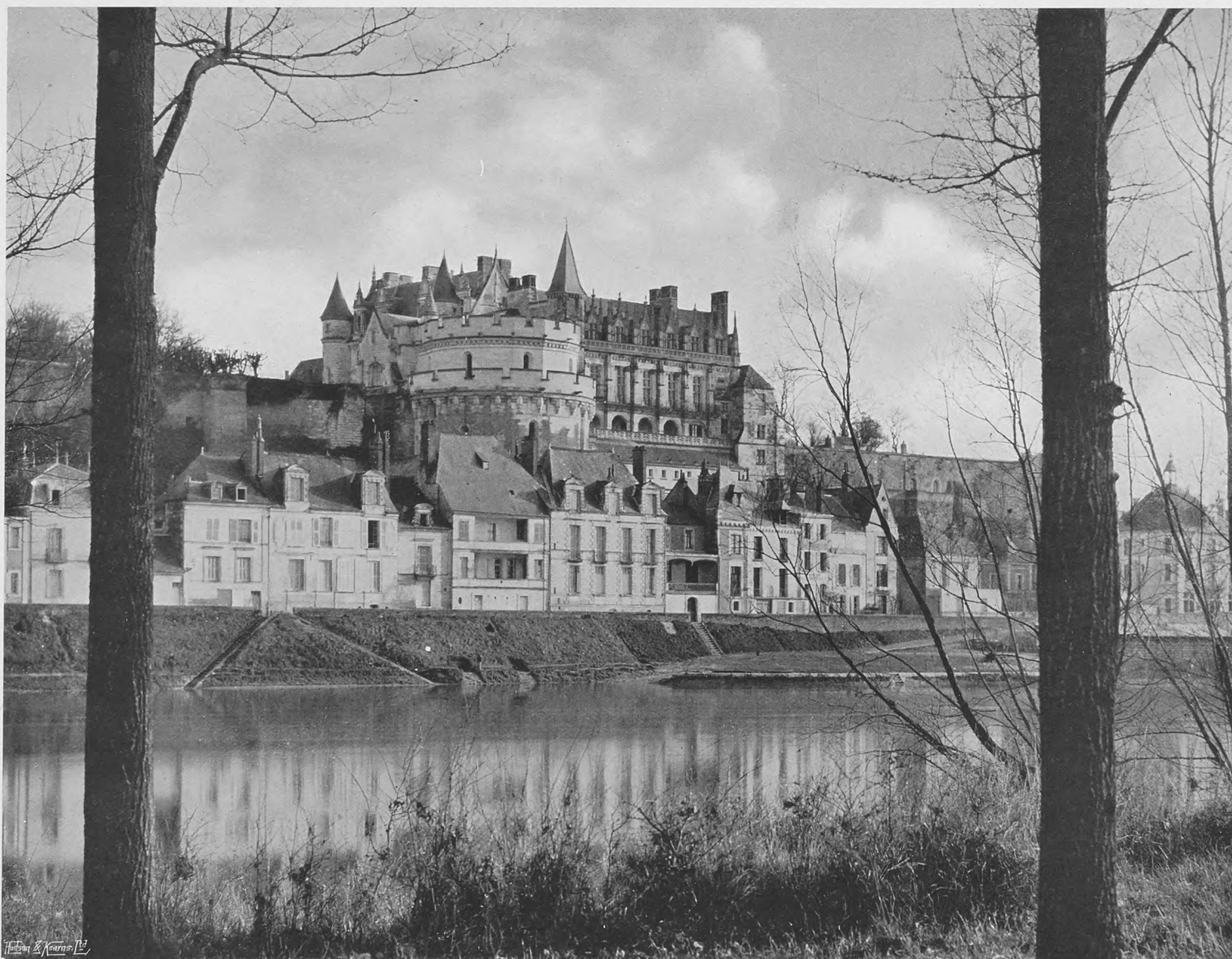


CHAPTER XI.

AMBOISE, INDRE-ET-LOIRE.\*

**A**MBOISE is the only castle in France, as far as our present knowledge goes, which has had the honour of being sketched by Leonardo da Vinci, and though his pen-and-ink drawing of it in the Windsor collection is not a more faithful representation of architecture than was Turner's vision of Château Gaillard reproduced in previous pages, no one who knows how to treat a Leonardo manuscript can fail to recognise its authenticity. When looked at in a mirror (as all the great Italian's handwriting must be read) the round tower that is Amboise's chief feature stands in its right place, and you find that Leonardo's first impression of the castle is very much your own as it breaks on you from the bridge across the river.

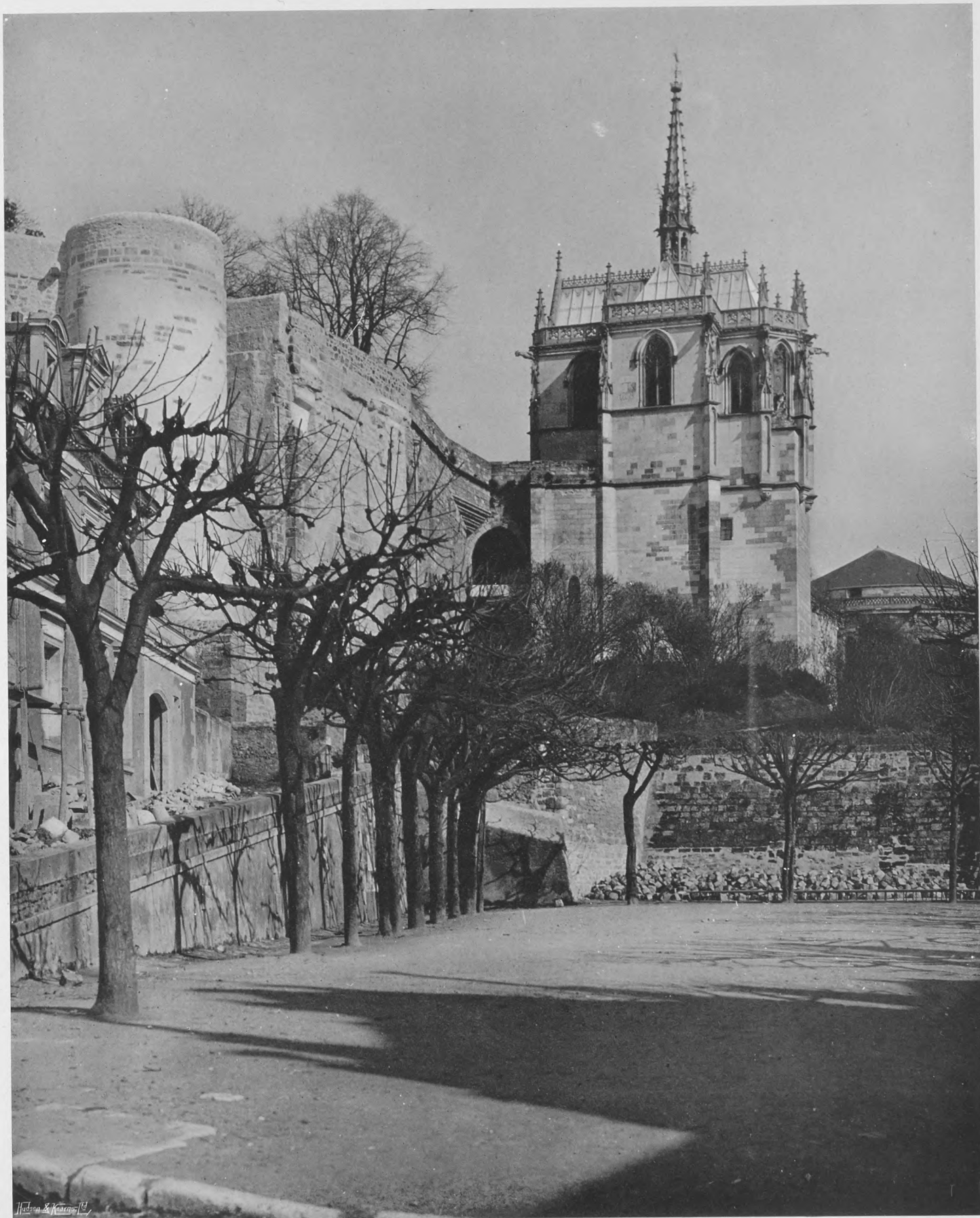
It is, therefore, with Leonardo, and with one other famous visitor to that gallery above the arches which Leonardo drew, that I shall chiefly deal in this short sketch of a place that has been so often described before in every detail of its long and varied history from Vercingetorix to



162.—AMBOISE.

\* A Seat of the Duc d'Orleans.





163.—APPROACH FROM THE PLACE DU CHATEAU.





164.—AMBOISE FROM THE RIVER BANK.



Abd-el-Kader. That other visitor upon the rusted gallery was Mary Queen of Scots, and between her death and the birth of Leonardo you may find all that is greatest in the story of Amboise.

I know few places that still preserve so well the double character of a royal fortress—the domination of its surroundings, the imposing of its strength and splendour on the town and river underneath, and, on the other hand, the remote and special quality of guarded isolation which rests upon the quiet terraces of its uplifted garden, terraces that breathe a higher air, a more reserved and prouder charm than can be felt beneath the pinnacles and buttresses that fence it



165.—THE CHAPEL AND RAMPARTS.





166.—THE CHAPEL ENTRANCE.

in. It stands like some Gothic Acropolis above a smaller Athens and a wider stream ; and it is built, with that gorgeous eye for situations which the older masons cultivated, upon high ground that looks higher than it actually is because the stonework rises from the lowest levels to the topmost platform, and completely commands the approaches of the noble bridge across the Loire.

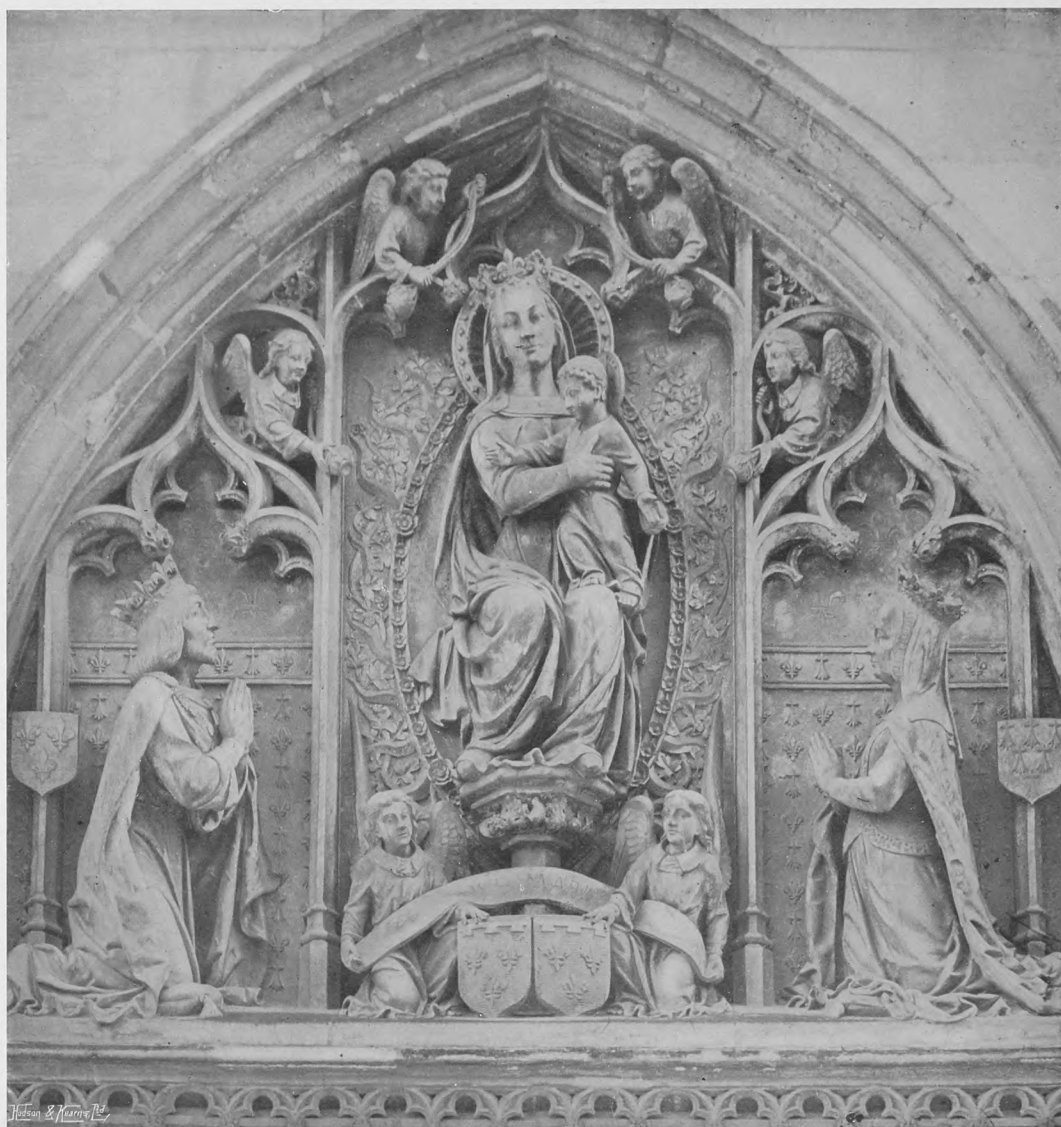
The castle is now a kind of lordly refuge for the poorer dependants of the House of Orléans, and there is little left within it to recall the work of those Italian artists whom Charles VIII brought back with him from Italy. But neither time nor man has yet been able to ruin the



massive exterior which had mainly risen before his reign, and which both he and Louis XII still further decorated. It was the playground of the youth of Francis I, and he cared little for it after he had grown to man's estate. Chambord is the measure of his taste, and Blois the test of his French workmen's aptitude. The relatively small portion of sixteenth century Amboise, which is still standing, remains very much as Francis II and his young Queen saw it, and the only restoration possible has been the necessary strengthening of a fabric that was nearly destroyed in the Franco-German War. One of the vast round towers, its special pride, has, for instance, received an obviously new set of battlements after the model of Pierrefonds. But the main lines of the massive masonry remain untouched; and though the façade that fronts the river has a fine effect of rich decoration, the inner courtyard is almost coldly bare. It is the garden and the terraces that make the buildings of Amboise still beautiful—these, and the

exquisite jewel of its chapel, reared on tall shafts of stone like an expanding lily on its rising stalk.

This chapel is probably the first thing that will be discovered by the visitor who wanders through the lower entrance and climbs gradually up towards the higher ground. From the level of its entrance it seems but a small and delicate fragment. Yet from without the castle walls it is one of the main features of the buildings' outlines. Above its doorway is set the sculptured story of St. Hubert and the miraculous stag, together with the legend of St. Christopher and of St. Anthony in the desert, the latter on the spectator's left. The mixture of three such entirely different subjects on the



167.—CARVING OVER DOORWAY OF CHAPEL.

same panel is characteristic rather of French Gothic than of Italian workmanship, and if it must be attributed to a foreigner, there is more probability in thinking it was a Flemish hand to which we owe it. But the carvings inside are more Italian both in taste and execution, especially the grotesque figure of the ape above the altar, which was selected by Champfleury as a typical illustration of that age and country. This detailed work was probably all finished in the reign of Louis XII.

Italian taste most certainly presided over the gardens, for they were laid out by Pacello da Mercogliano, the Neapolitan. But his treeless parterre of varied "knots" surrounded by colonnaded loggias is not easily recognisable in the broad walks and shady avenues of clipped trees—very much like the famous avenue in Trinity Gardens at Oxford—which are the delight of every visitor. It is not in architecture alone that the Italians impressed their memory on the Valley of the Loire. Two of the former patrons of Leonardo were known there before





168.—SCULPTURE OVER CHAPEL ENTRANCE.

*The Story of St. Hubert and the miraculous Stag, with the legend of St. Christopher and St. Anthony in the Desert.*



his own arrival—Ludovico Sforza, called *Il Moro*, and Cæsar Borgia. After taking Bayard prisoner at Milan, only to set him free again, Ludovico had been betrayed to La Trémouille by his Swiss mercenaries, and was sent to the dungeons of Loches, where he languished for nine years in a sunless subterranean cavern before he died. The pitiful frescoes and inscriptions he left in his cell by the banks of the Indre were still fresh when Leonardo drew the great towers of Amboise across the Loire, not very far off. At Blois, on the same stream, at Chinon, on the Vienne, the recollection of Cæsar Borgia can have been scarcely less vivid in the minds of the inhabitants; for it was at Blois that Cæsar, who was created Duc de Valentinois as a reward for the Papal consent to Louis XII's divorce, had been himself married to Charlotte d'Albret. The French King had made his triumphal entry into Milan with his new ally in October, 1499, and saw there for the first time the fresco of the Last Supper and the equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza. Though it is by the former of these masterpieces that Leonardo's



169.—WINDOWS OVER BALCONIES.

fame has gained its greatest modern expansion, it was his work upon the statue that most deeply impressed his genius upon his countrymen. The project for it was as old as 1472, but for many years "*non era un Lionardo ancor trovato*," as Baldassare Taccone said when the model by Da Vinci was first set up in 1493 in the court of the castle of the Visconti, when Bianca Maria Sforza was married to the Emperor Maximilian. It was never cast in bronze, because its sculptor insisted on attempting it in one piece, and sufficient money was never forthcoming from the Duke's exchequer for the purpose, or even for his artists' salaries. There is every probability that the model seen by Louis XII was partially destroyed when his restraining hand was no longer over his soldiers and they occupied Milan after the battle of Novara in April, 1500. "I cannot speak of it without grief and indignation," writes Fra Sabba di Castiglione; "so noble and masterly a work made a target by the Gascon bowmen." Enough was left for the Duke of Ferrara to ask the Cardinal d'Amboise for a cast of what, even then, was "daily perishing." But Louis XII would not accord permission. We have, therefore, nothing save



a few sketches in Leonardo's manuscripts that can recall a work which was more highly praised during its brief existence than any other single work of the Renaissance. And of its artist's other sculptures we know even less.

The Duke had fled from the law when Louis XII entered the city. In April Leonardo wrote: "The Duke has lost his state, his possessions and his liberty, and not one of his works has been completed." The disappointment conveyed in the last few words is perhaps the reason for the cold impassiveness of the first sentence. The artist moved on to Mantua, Venice and Florence, where his Madonna with St. Anne was the admiration of the populace.

But by the autumn of 1501, with a mind that ever shifted from sculpture to painting, from biology to architecture, from mathematics to engineering, Leonardo was inspecting the fortresses of Romagna for Cæsar Borgia. Of that journey he has left notes concerning the dovecote and the palace steps of Urbino, the bell of Siena, the library of Pesaro, the harmony of falling water in the fountain of Rimini, the breaking of the waves upon the shore of Piombino, the bastions for the tower of Porto Cesenatico, the contour of the ground in Central Italy. In 1503 he was in fresh service, studying for the Signoria of



170.—COURTYARD, CORRIDOR AND TOWER OF CHARLES XII FACADE.

Florence how to divert the course of the Arno and thus cut off Pisa from the sea. Soon afterwards he was at work on the Battle of Anghiari, the third great commission of his life. Again his passion for experimenting robbed the world of yet another masterpiece. His work upon it was, indeed, interrupted by a summons to Milan from the Cardinal d'Amboise and Louis XII, who speaks of him as "our dear and well-beloved Léonard da Vinci, our painter and engineer in ordinary," and by the death of his father, Piero. But the Battle of Anghiari remained a fragment which soon disappeared, and the cartoon itself is lost. Its artist's mind had once more been directed in other channels. The triumphal



entry of Louis XII into Milan in 1509 was graced with an "automatic lion" designed by Leonardo, whose praises still echo in the verses of the French Court poets.

After the death of Gaston de Foix at Ravenna in 1512, Maximilian Sforza, strong in the support of Spain, the Pope and Venice, re-entered Milan. Leonardo shows his customary indifference to these political catastrophes; but his work for Italian Princes was evidently over. His sympathies had been too publicly in favour of the French invader. He first sought, in these circumstances, for the patronage of the Pope, Giovanni de' Medici; and Melzi accompanied him in 1513 to Rome, where he worked in the Belvedere, and no doubt painted "the portrait of a lady of Florence executed by request of the late Julian de' Medici, the Magnificent," which was seen at Cloux, near Amboise, in 1517, by Antonio de Beatis, secretary to the Cardinal of Aragon. The reason for its presence there was that in December, 1516, Leonardo had been attending the Concordat held in Bologna between the Pope and Francis I, and that when the French King returned home, a month afterwards, Leonardo went with him. The artist had definitely thrown in his lot with France. He came to the Valley of the Loire to die, and close to Amboise he breathed his last.

The official salary allotted to Leonardo da Vinci, the "premier peintre et ingénieur et architecte du Roy, mechanischien d'estat," was about one thousand four hundred pounds, and he was given a residence at the little manor house of Cloux, near Amboise. Of the courtyard and entrance, with its soft warm brickwork and cream-coloured mouldings, Mr. Frederick Evans has made a photograph for these pages, and no traveller in the Loire Valley should omit to visit one of the few places now left where Leonardo is known to have lived for some time. It was built for Le Loup, maitre d'hôtel to Louis XI. We may imagine that the old man passed most of his days in his studio, but his mind remained to the end more active than his body, and there are traces of many various projects in which he was engaged, such as the festivities at the Dauphin's birth and christening and the wedding of the Duke of Urbino, or the planning of a canal, with locks near Romorantin, that was to join the Loire and the Saône and thus provide a highway by water from Italy to the northern centres of France. Sketches have survived, too, for a great pleasure-palace and water-gardens that would have involved the destruction of much of the Amboise we know.

Amid all this the pictures which are Leonardo's noblest claim to immortality to-day took the same secondary place in his activities which they seem to have done throughout his strenuous life of discovery and research. But among the many illustrious visitors who must have come to Cloux between 1516 and 1519, one at least has left on record the paintings which he saw. In October, 1517, the Cardinal of Aragon visited Leonardo, and his secretary describes the picture of the Florentine lady already mentioned, a second of the young John the Baptist, which was probably that now in the Louvre, and a third of the Madonna and Child in the lap of St. Anne, "all three perfect." They had probably all been brought with him from Rome and Florence. The secretary also notices that "a certain paralysis has attacked his right hand which forbids the expecting of any more good work from him"; but Leonardo was left-handed, and always wrote very badly with his right hand, as may be seen from the manuscripts. His drawings are invariably shaded from left to right, for the same reason, and the writing of his notes goes from the right-hand end of the line towards the left of the page, so that they have to be read in a mirror. This also was because he wrote with his left hand, as his friend, Fra Luca Pacioli, definitely states.

Considering the few pictures we hear of at Cloux, it is probable that the priceless collection of manuscripts was the most valuable of his possessions there; certainly it is the last place in which we know that they were all together, and those on anatomy, on the nature of water and on various machines, his visitors saw "in an endless number of volumes which will be profitable and very delectable." I have examined a large number of them, and possess several hundred photographs of the drawings and diagrams they contain. Apart from this portion, which is perhaps the most valuable, as it is certainly the most lovely, the papers are very much like the notes that might be made by a very exceptional professor for a course of very extraordinary lectures. Their literary construction lags far behind the ardour for discovery that inspired them. They remained almost as unknown to Leonardo's contemporaries and immediate





171.—THE TOWN AND THE RIVER FROM THE BALCONY.



successors as he was himself in the last years of his life. In many cases they were either lost or concealed for centuries, with the curious result that the laws which he established or divined have been in that long interval of oblivion rediscovered independently and proved more clearly by advancing knowledge. So that, though many discoveries had to be ante-dated, when the manuscripts at last came to light, the reputation of his successors remains as bright as it had been before. We think no less of Lyell because it is now known that, centuries before Lyell's theories of the age of the earth were published, Leonardo had calculated two hundred thousand years for the accumulations at the mouth of the Po, and had explained the meaning of the strata in the Apennines revealed by the cutting of the river Lamona. His method was to penetrate the secret hiding-places of truth with a passionate industry that never shrank from toil, that has been paralleled by few save Darwin. His anatomical drawings, apart from their exquisite



172.—TOUR DES MINIMES FROM THE BATTLEMENTS.

draughtsmanship, contain so many keen parallels and suggestive indications that the author of *The Origin of Species* would have perused them with delight. His studies of trees and plants and clouds would have enchanted the writer of *Modern Painters*. But, as far as we are aware, neither Darwin nor Ruskin had ever seen these manuscripts.

I might follow out the same line of thought in many details: Leonardo suggested the theory of the eye which was slowly elaborated by Kepler and by Helmholtz afterwards. "Il moto," wrote the Italian, "é causa d'ogni vita." "Activity," said Professor Clifford, four hundred years later, "is the first condition of development." It was Leonardo who first proposed the division of animals into vertebrates and invertebrates, and first guessed the circulation of the blood without having discovered its actual mechanism. It was he who first explained the presence of fossil shells upon the arid mountain-tops as due to the action of





173.—UPPER BALCONY OF THE TOUR DE CESAR.  
*Showing the Railing, on Spikes of which the Heads of the massacred Huguenots were stuck.*



water, "Nature's charioteer," which left these traces of living organisms behind her in the dawn of a far older world. He anticipated Cuvier with the proof that the floor of the ocean is continually rising, sometimes rapidly, sometimes with almost inappreciable slowness. If he may be said to have founded the scientific study of anatomy by means of dissection, he certainly was the first to investigate the structural classification of plants—to enunciate the botanical laws of phyllotaxis. He even anticipated Copernicus by the assertion, "Il sole non si move." He laid down the principles of those laws of the movement and equilibrium of fluids which were completed by Pascal, D'Alembert and others. He designed a breech-loading cannon which propelled its ball by steam, and invented paddle-wheels for boats. He studied the flights of birds with extraordinary accuracy, and suggested the use of parachutes and of screws on a vertical axis as a means of aerial locomotion. No wonder that Cellini heard King Francis say, "He did not believe that any other man had come into the world who had attained so great a knowledge as Leonardo, and that not only as sculptor, painter and architect, but as a profound philosopher as well."

The King may have thought so once, but he must have easily forgotten it. It is not even metaphorically true that Leonardo died in the arms of Francis, except in so far that the artist's last lodging upon earth had been provided by the King. But no provision seems to have been made for the interment of all that was mortal of the greatest thinker of his own or any age.

The modern bust in the gardens of Amboise is his only memorial there, and it stands above some ashes that may or may not be Leonardo's. For though the Italian had left instructions to be interred in the church of St. Florentin in the castle of Amboise, no one remembered he was buried there when it was destroyed by Ducos in 1808. When M. Arsène Houssaye dug through the ruins in 1854, he found a skull. "The wide high forehead hung over the eyes. The occipital arc was ample and pure." But no one can tell whether it was Leonardo's. At Cloux M. Houssaye also found two stones marked with the letters "LEO . . . INC . . ." They are the sole memorials likely to be contemporary. He died on May 2nd, 1519, and to his beloved pupil and companion, Francesco Melzi, he bequeathed all his manuscripts and personal effects before he "lay down happily to die as one who slept happy after a long day's toil."

Very different is the character and personality of the next outstanding heroine whom I have chosen as typical of the story of Amboise. In November, 1559, just forty years after Leonardo's death, Mary Stuart was riding into Amboise beside her young husband, Francis II, and all the town turned out to cheer her. In March she was looking down, from that rusted iron balcony which crosses the great façade of the castle above the river, upon a scene of carnage that was rarely paralleled even in those days of ruthless massacre. The Loire rolled thick with corpses. The château itself and all its woods were crammed with dead. The gallows and the scaffold never ceased their hideous work. The whole place reeked like a shambles.

The Guises, fairly maddened with blood, had crushed the ill-fated conspiracy of the Huguenots under La Renaudie by wholesale slaughter; and Catherine de' Medici was looking on, with Mary Stuart and the whole French Court. Those who forget that Mary Queen of Scots was the daughter not only of James V, but of Mary of Lorraine, and that she was not yet eighteen when, as Queen of France, she saw such scenes as the massacre of Amboise, will never be able rightly to appreciate the years that followed in the life of a woman who expiated her shortcomings to the full and met her death upon the block, as she had faced her life throughout, with noble courage and unshaken resolution.

The exquisite crayon sketch of her, made just at the time she was in Amboise, by Clouet (or, as some think, by Jean de Court) shows "the bald expanse of brow" that, in those times, was fashionable; but above it is the reddish brown hair of her girlhood, delicately "crimped." Her eyebrows, not too close together, show a thin, pencilled arch. Her eyes are reddish brown, somewhat long and narrow; her nose is long and low and straight. She looks too prim and staid for the creature of infinitely changeable moods we know, for the woman who flashed so readily from laughter into tears and back again. But there is no sly, foxy look about her; no





174.—SALLE DES ETATS.



hunted expression in the defiant eyes of one who fights for life. "Espiègle," Balzac calls her; and we may well believe it. But there was a dazzling pallor in her complexion, a curious haunting charm in the small mouth, the prettily rounded chin, the graceful oval of the face; a promise of vivacity and passion behind the seemliness and quiet of a Queen.

Mary was but six when in 1548 she set sail for France as the betrothed of the Dauphin. Of the society in which she lived for the next thirteen years Brantôme is the Petronius. Compared to it the Court of Charles II sounds like the Court of Queen Victoria. Its jests were murder and debauchery. The policy of its leader was based on the corruption of her children; and

to the feeblest of that poisonous brood Mary was married in 1558, six months before Elizabeth ascended the throne of England. By the counsel of the Guises their niece bore the arms of England as well as those of France and Scotland. It was an inauspicious start.

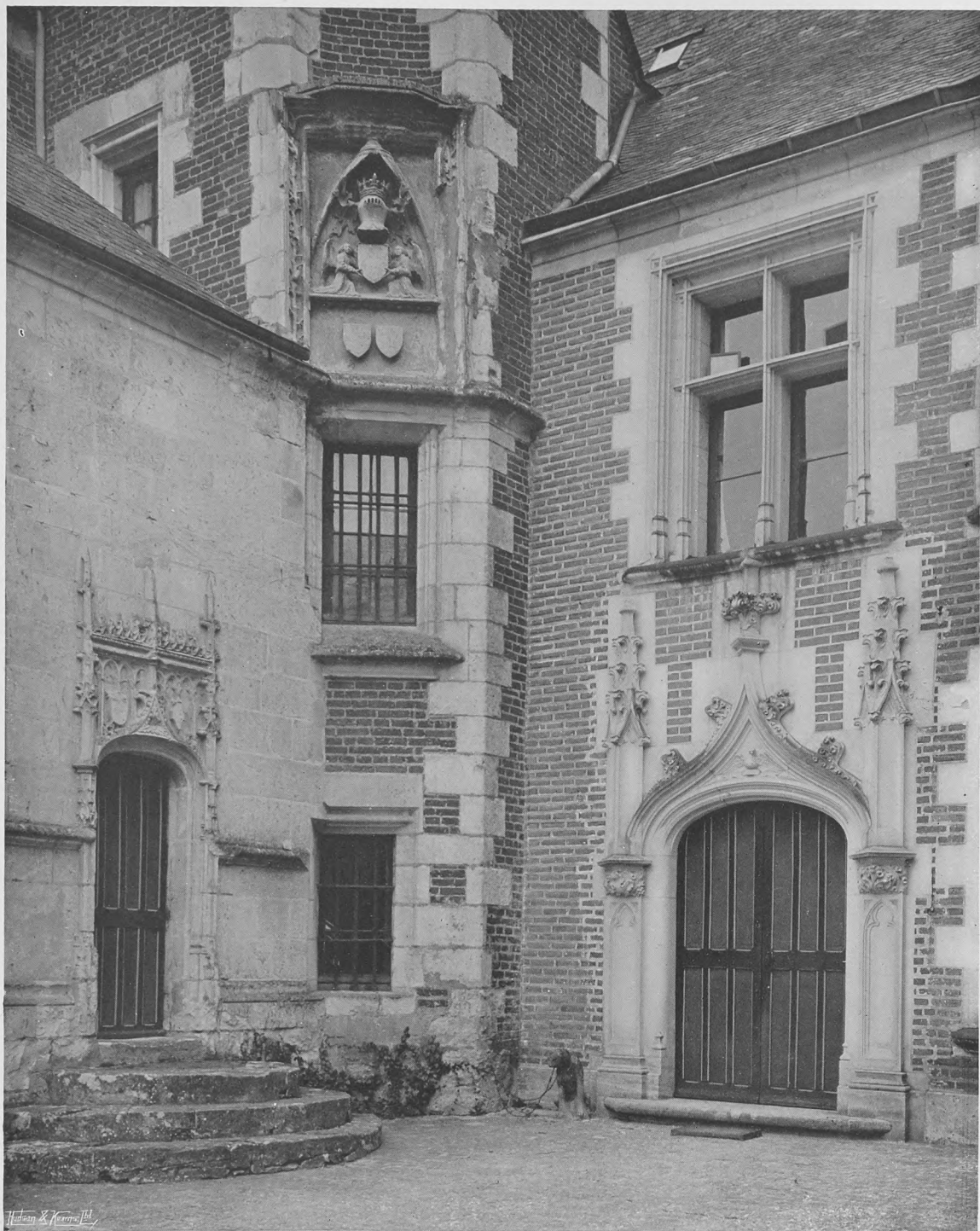
You may imagine the men and women among whom that young Queen lived her life, the *escadron volant* of Catherine de' Medici, the mignons of the future Henri III, the men who were to be the assassins of St. Bartholomew. In the midst of them, her sickly husband, with his pale little puffy face and flat nose, stands beside the Queen Mother, the strong, intelligent, ruthless Florentine with the true muzzle of the Medici that became the underhanging jowl of her old age. In 1554, when scarcely twelve, with pretty



175.—THE RAMPARTS FROM A STREET OF THE OLD TOWN.



Miss Fleming at her side, Mary made her first entrance on this sinister stage at a fête in the gardens of St. Germain. Already she showed an astonishing acquaintance with books, affairs and men. In a very few years she was surrounded by a little court of poets, Du Bellay, Ronsard and De Maison Fleur among them. As Dauphine and as Queen her influence in France was even greater than her enemies imagined; and a romantic memory of her youthful beauty, a tender pity for her later sorrows never faded in a land where she was Queen for so short a time. "All the world wondered," wrote Giovanni Correro, "to see a girl so



176.—CLOS LUCE, THE HOUSE OF LEONARDO DA VINCI.

delicately nurtured and so little used to government able to resist the influences against her. But her joy was short-lived. At one blow she lost her husband, her freedom, and her crown."

Those who criticise the actions of Mary as a Queen, in the troubled years when she was fighting for her crown in Scotland, forget sometimes that she was also a woman as passionate as she was brave. In 1568, at Carlisle, Sir Francis Knollys wrote the best description and the noblest panegyric extant of the Queen of Scots. He noticed particularly her indifference to form and ceremony, her daring grace and openness of manner, her frank love of revenge, her readiness to face any peril in the hope of victory, her intense delight in courage, which she praised in her enemies as keenly as she deplored the lack of it in any of her friends. Her loyalty was equally indomitable, as she showed after her arrest at Tixall Park, when she cheered the wife of her English secretary with promises to answer for every accusation brought against him, even with baptising his new-born child in her own name and with her own hands. In her will the same keynote is struck. Not a friend is forgotten, and every enemy is remembered. Her mind was as implacable to the one as it was faithful to the other.

If her courage was rare, her intelligence was just as brilliant. No kinder friend could be desired, no enemy more deadly could be dreaded. "Passion alone could shake the double



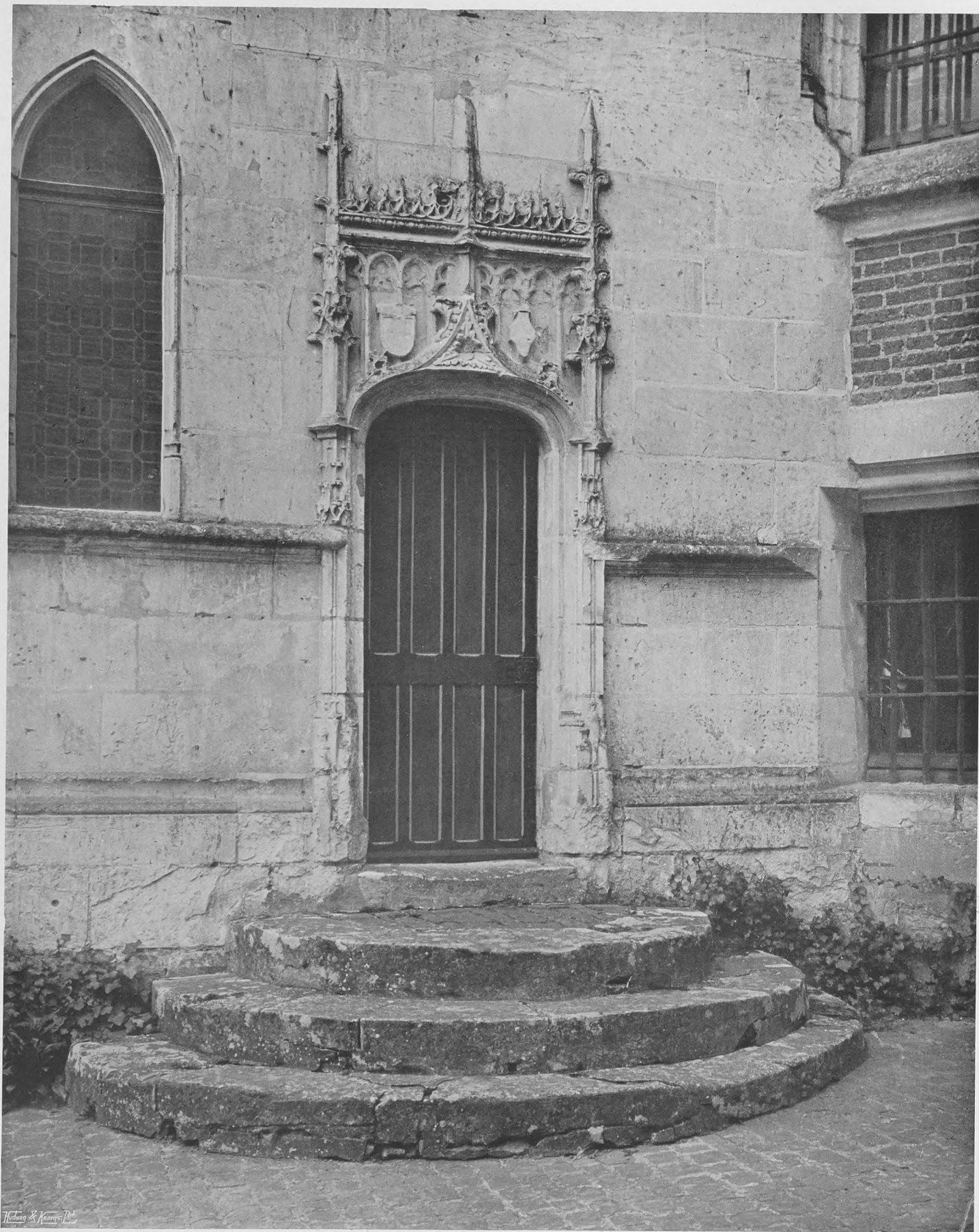
fortress of her impregnable heart and ever active brain," wrote Swinburne, in the finest biographical study he ever penned. "Of repentance it would seem that she knew as little as of fear, having been trained from her infancy in a religion where the Decalogue was supplanted by the Creed." In that atmosphere it is no wonder that she learnt the most delicate acts of dissimulation; it is extraordinary that she ever preferred daring to subtlety, or that beyond the voluptuous or intellectual charms of her beauty or her culture she preserved the fresher charm of a simplicity as frank as it was fearless. In patriotism alone she was inferior to Elizabeth, and by that alone was she defeated; for much as Elizabeth loved herself, she yet loved England more, and against that irresistible strength of national emotion even the qualities which made Mary Queen of Scots so unparalleled a friend and leader were of no avail. To me the two figures of Leonardo and of Mary are always evoked by the Italian gardens and the proud



177.—ALLEY ON RAMPARTS.

battlements of Amboise. Beneath the trees I see the stately figure of the one, his head bowed on a delicate hand, thinking his last over the projects that were to outlive him for so long. Upon the gallery and above the huge round towers, the Tour de César and the Tour des Minimes, I see the brilliant white face of the Queen of Scots beneath her red-brown hair, facing the Huguenot massacres as she faced her own fate—unflinching, steadfast. It is almost the last fair thing the towers of Amboise have beheld. Up those vast inclined planes within the Tour des Minimes the Emperor had ridden on horseback as the guest of Francis. They were the slow, sad thoroughfare of many a prisoner after Mary Stuart had left France. Here were shut up César de Vendôme and his brother Alexandre, sons of Gabrielle d'Estrées. Here wandered the banished Duc de Choiseul. Under the Revolution it became a prison, and its estate was little bettered when Napoleon gave it to his vandal colleague in the consulate, Roger Ducos.



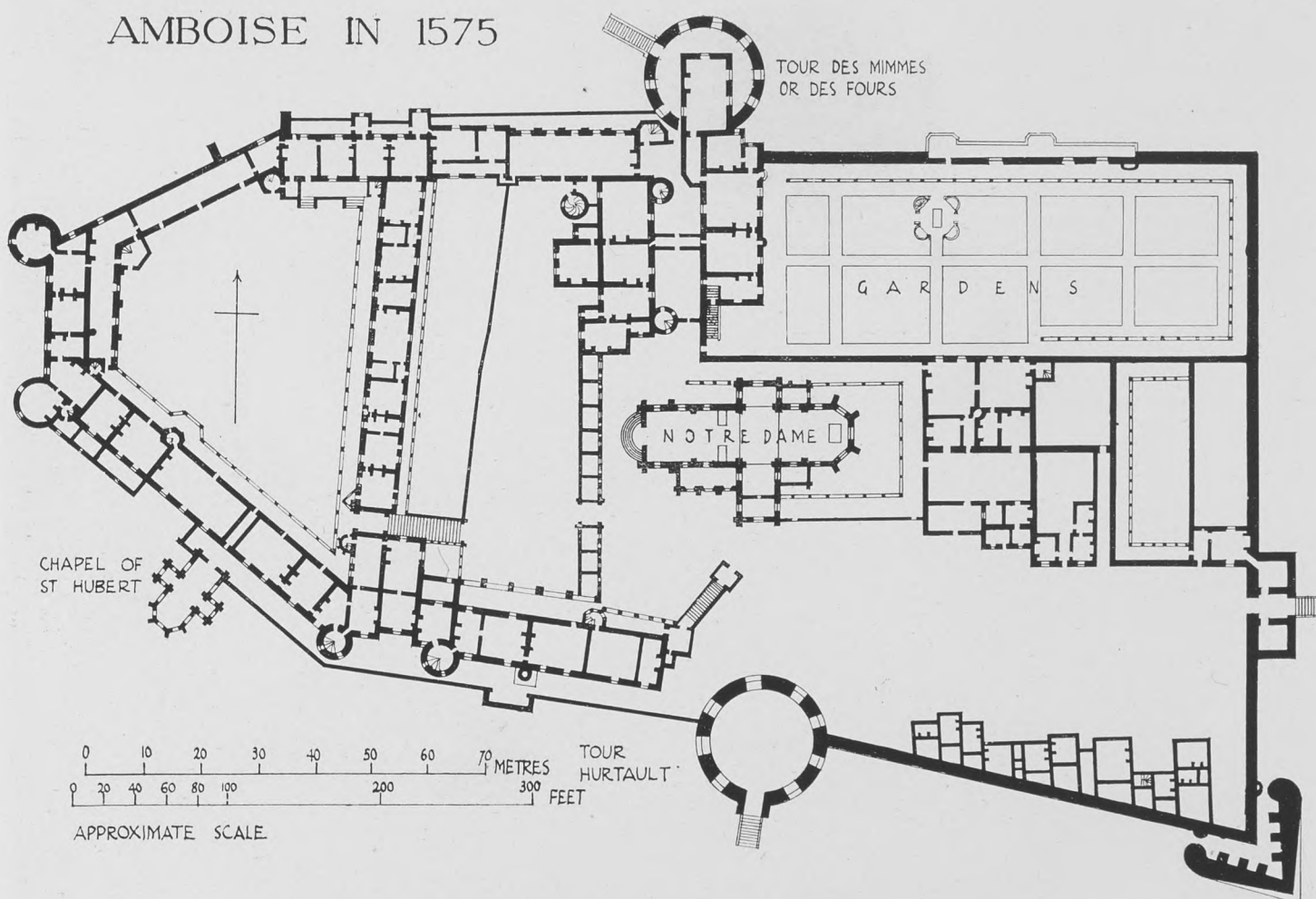


178.—A DOORWAY AT CLOS LUCE.



The last of its prisoners was Abd-el-Kader. Finally it passed back to the Orleans family, in whose hands it remains to this day, as the hospice for their old retainers. The beauties of its interior have passed away for ever ; but the splendour of its site can never be taken from it while one stone remains upon another. La Fontaine thought the view from its battlements one of the most beautiful he ever looked upon. And from them you may still look out upon that valley where Plantagenets have bled and died, where the Black Prince's troops have pillaged up and down the river, where Sir Walter Raleigh served his first campaign, in that broad, sunlit landscape

Where from the frequent bridge  
Like emblems of infinity  
The trenchéd waters run from sky to sky.



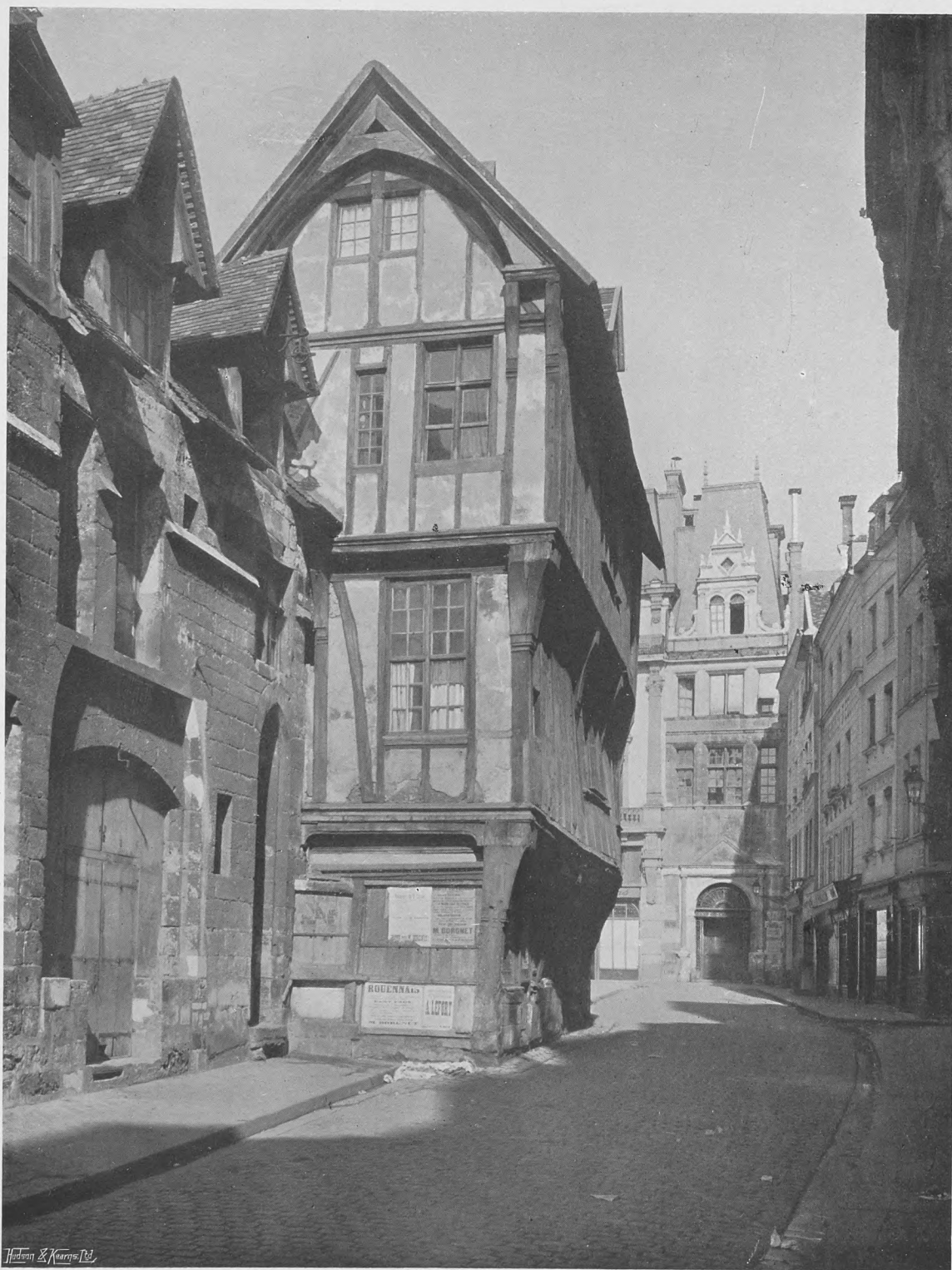


CHAPTER XII.

THE MAISON BOURGTHEROULDE.\*

IN any list of the most famous of the historic houses of France it would be impossible to omit at least two of the magnificent buildings which are the pride of Rouen ; more especially is this the case when that list is being compiled for the benefit of English readers, for

Rouen is almost as full of English memories as it is of French architecture ; and the houses illustrated in this article (by photographs in which the skill of Mr. Frederick Evans has enabled me to publish some important artistic details for the first time) recall associations which are most intimately bound up with the crucial periods of English history in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They are, first, that very rare example, a wooden fifteenth century house, called the House of Joan of Arc ; and, secondly, the Maison Bourgtheroulde, which contains the only contemporary carving in existence of the Field of the Cloth of Gold. I have added pictures of



179.—MAISON JEANNE D'ARC, RUE ST. ROMAIN.

\* The Property of the Comptoir d'Escompte de Rouen.



the Palais de Justice, which was built at a date between the two just mentioned, because it provides one of the finest examples known of those magnificently decorated dormer windows of which we saw an earlier type at Josselin. In any serious consideration of that splendid architectural transition from the French Gothic to the formal Renaissance it would be impossible to omit this work, though its history and its surroundings are foreign to my present purpose.

Neither France nor England has anything to be proud of in the tragedy of Joan of Arc, which was carried to its dreadful end at Rouen. Taken prisoner at the siege of Compiègne in May, 1430, by the soldiers of John of Luxembourg, Jeanne was transferred to Rouen in December, and was guarded by Talbot's Englishmen in the donjon of the Place Beauvreuil,

where you may stand beneath the only roof still in existence which once echoed to the living accents of her voice. The city of Rouen possessed an ancient and inviolable privilege in the curious and unique custom which permitted the canons of her cathedral to release at Ascension-tide, with much impressive ceremony, a prisoner condemned to death. In the same year that Joan of Arc was imprisoned in the donjon, the canons had been permitted by the Duke of Bedford to visit that very prison in the exercise of that prerogative, and there is abundant evidence that any choice they might have made, then or later, would have been respected by the English authorities. It is one of the blackest stains upon the history of Rouen that no attempt whatever should have been recorded on the part of her citizens to exercise their privilege in the case of the woman most worthy of all on the long roll of pardons to benefit by the protection of the Church. It is still more extraordinary that neither during her journey to the city nor at the long martyrdom of her execution was any attempt made to rescue her by citizens who had proved themselves among the bravest in France under unparalleled circumstances of privation and distress. The Englishmen's hatred received its most powerful ally in the vanity and malice of the French ecclesiastics. Joan's intense patriotism and worship of nationality were as repugnant to them as her instinctive doctrine of the liberty of conscience. So it was Pierre

Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais, who brought



180.—DETAILS OF A WINDOW.

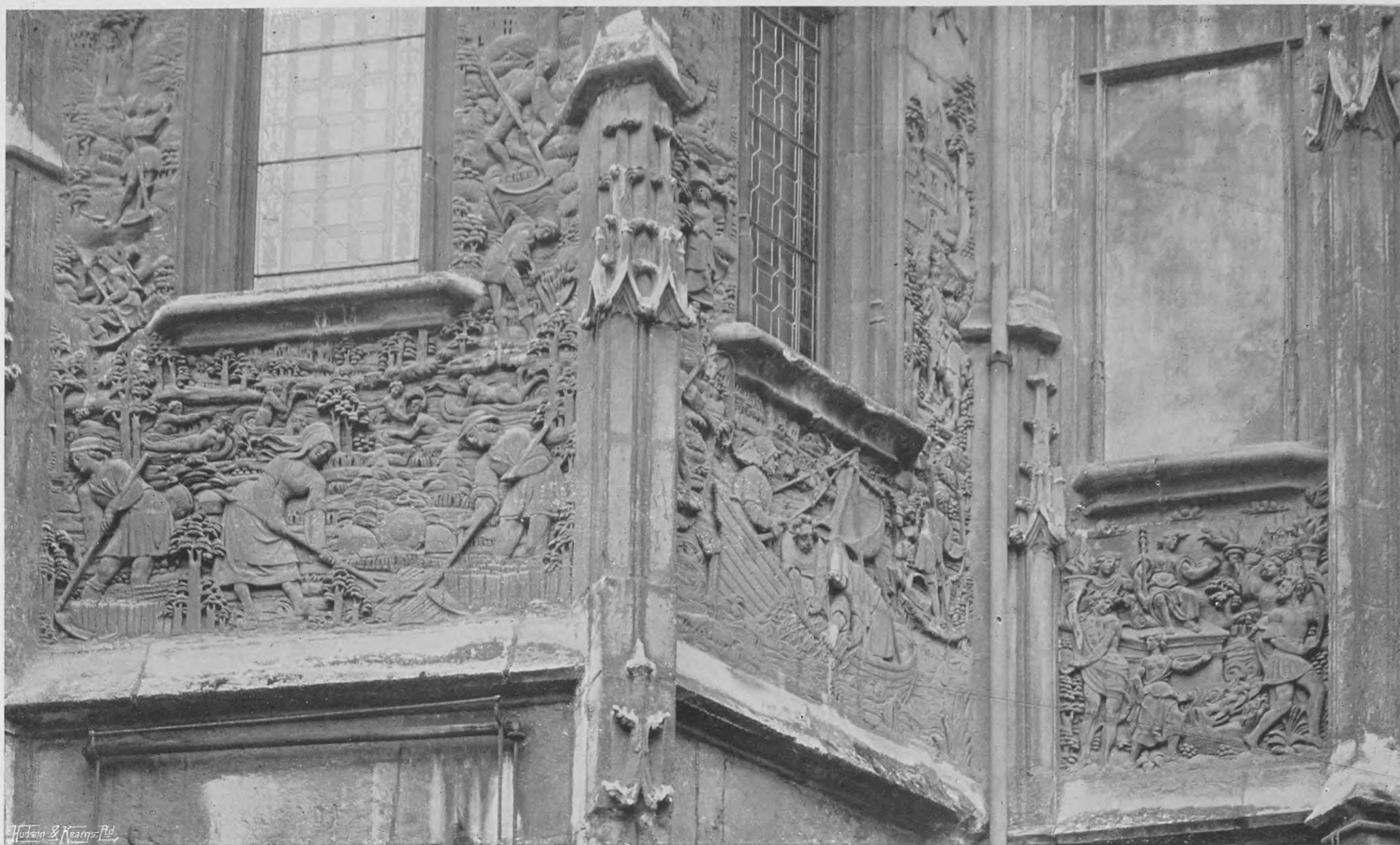
the King of England's request to John of Luxembourg that he would deliver up his famous prisoner to the Church to be judged. If not a soldier of France stirred on her journey into captivity, if not a citizen of Rouen moved to save her from the flames, it was not likely that the French King would lift his hand to stay that iniquitous bargain. At the price of an army she was brought to Rouen and the Bishop of Beauvais forthwith began to pack his jury. The only one who objected barely escaped alive. The English King's two uncles of Bedford and of Winchester watched that their orders were carried out, and the price of every man is recorded in the exact account books of the time. Several of her unjust judges lived in the Rue St. Romain, and one of them dwelt in this ancient house. All suffered the swift vengeance that repaid.





181.—MAISON BOURGTHEROULDE: THE COURTYARD.





182.—MAISON BOURGTHEROULDE: THE MOWERS.

Soon after her ashes had been cast into the Seine, the Bishop of Beauvais died of apoplexy, Nicole Midi was struck with leprosy within a few days of her death, Loyseleur died suddenly at Basle, the corpse of d'Estivet was found in a gutter outside the city gates. Above the great furnace that warms the cathedral choir the tombstone of Denis Gastinel, another judge of Joan



183.—MAISON BOURGTHEROULDE: CARDINAL WOLSEY.



of Arc, lies near the north-east pillar of the lantern. The heroic peasant girl these men condemned to death was burnt on the Place du Vieux Marché, near the spot where a tablet now records her memory. The fountain in what is called the Place de la Pucelle has nothing to do with the tragedy of which the old house in the Rue St. Romain is almost the only private habitation that survives as a contemporary witness.

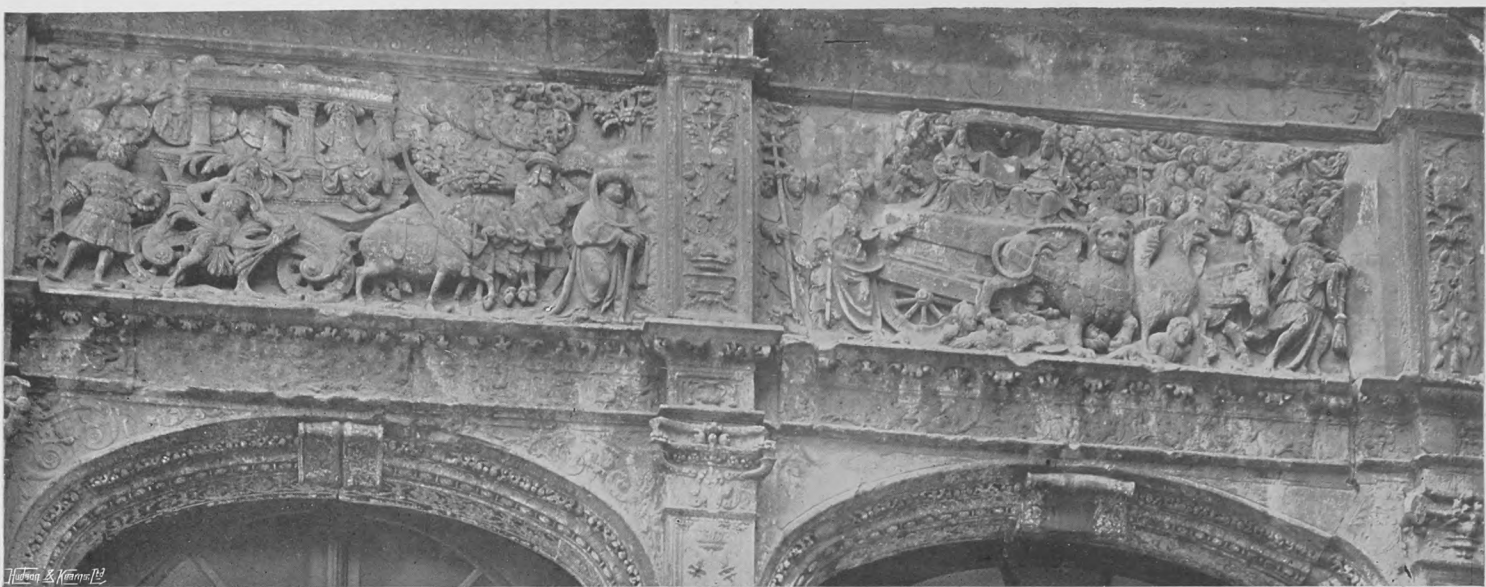
It is at the corner of this Place de la Pucelle and of the Rue du Panneret that the Maison Bourgtheroulde, the main subject of these pages, is to be found, and the photographs here reproduced of the carvings on its walls form the most exact and complete series yet published. I must briefly describe the house as a whole before I mention its most important details. The exterior façade upon the Place de la Pucelle only exists, alas ! in the drawings made by Lelieur in the sixteenth century. Lost to us are the high roof with its lofty, crested windows, the side turret at the angle of the street, the exquisitely carved entrance between two pillars bearing



184.—MAISON BOURGTHEROULDE: THE ENGLISH CAMP AT GYNES.

statues on their capitals of Bacchus and of Cupid, which struck the keynote of the theme so richly developed in the interior courtyard—the theme of the meeting of King Francis and King Henry (whose faces are carved upon the inner side of the doorway) on the famous Field of the Cloth of Gold. Through the archway with its delicately pointed pinnacle above the curving vault you may pass from the street into the palace ; but you seem to move backward through the dark abysm of time between the twentieth and the sixteenth centuries. On the left is a magnificent series of windows richly set in sculptured panels. In the upper row are illustrated the Triumphs of Petrarch, in the lower is portrayed the meeting of the French and English kings. At right angles to these and straight before you as you enter is a façade that furnishes a most picturesque example of the French transition from the Gothic dwelling-house to the Renaissance palace. The six-sided turret that rises above the stairway contains the most remarkable specimens of sculpture in this part of the building, all in that low relief which we





185.—MAISON BOURGTHEROULDE: THE TRIUMPHS OF PETRARCH.

associate with Renaissance decoration ; but all so utterly in defiance of every rule of the stonemason's or the carver's art that they leave an indelible impression of being faithful copies of contemporary tapestry. The subjects chosen are an additional argument in favour of a hypothesis which is also supported by the equally pictorial treatment of several sculptures on the left-hand wing. For this turret is covered with the curious pastoral subjects so beloved in the " Bergeries " of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and so frequent both in surviving examples among the great collections and in the manuscript records of great houses up and down the Seine and Loire. Over the window that is immediately above the stairway a healthy young woman in short skirts is pitchforking away the crops which her two male companions are cutting with their scythes, those same downright weapons of agriculture you may see on the cathedral



186.—HENRY VIII AND FRANCIS I ON THE FIELD OF THE CLOTH OF GOLD.



walls at Amiens. Between the forest and the cornland runs a stream in which the merry harvesters are bathing and indulging in all kinds of antics in the water. On each side of the upper window men go on mowing industriously all through the forest that seems to clothe the fertile slopes beneath the seigneur's castle on the far horizon. Immediately on the right of this panel, the next composition begins beneath the window-sill with a fishing scene. Three men in a boat are hauling in a net. On the bank two others have each captured Brobdingnagian carp with rods and lines of a proportionate strength and thickness. The background on the right is filled with scenes yet more amazing. A squire on horseback sits with his arms outstretched in horror as he watches his helpless master being carried off through the clouds above him by a monstrous griffin. His cries, however, do not appear to have alarmed the neighbourhood, for on the other side of the window a very self-possessed young person paces slowly up the winding forest path towards the castle, carrying eggs and butter from the farm. On the upper storeys of the turret the subjects portrayed in "Bergeries" from the fifteenth century



187.—THE FRENCH PROCESSION AT THE FIELD OF THE CLOTH OF GOLD.

tapestries to the canvases of Watteau are unfolded with industrious accuracy. A gallant shepherd ties up his mistress's garter and is reprov'd for too much zeal. Another rests his head on his fair comrade's lap, while envious friends prepare to take advantage of his unprotected attitude. The sheep appear to be endeavouring to hide their blushes in the grass. Elsewhere a jovial picnic is in full swing. One shepherdess helps her lover to his luncheon with a spoon, to the sound of amorous bagpipes in the middle distance. A dog begs for some scraps from the repast. In yet another panel a spirited chase is depicted after a marauding wolf, while a shepherdess struggles to attend to her pastoral duties in spite of the usual embarrassing distractions. The whole design might just as well have been hung on flowing carpets out of every window. It defies every canon of sculpture. It has no definite limits and no regular "values" in relief; while the window frames break into the composition where and when they like. The little panel on the flat wall just to the right of the turret is treated in an entirely different manner, and is no doubt the work of another artist and the result of a finer inspiration.





188.—MAISON BOURGTHEROULDE : THE TRIUMPHS OF PETRARCH.

On a similarly high plane are the reliefs illustrating the Triumphs of Petrarch in the four panels above the windows nearest the stairway. The stone of the others is too badly crumbled, owing to the destructiveness of rain-water before the glass roofing was inserted, to be clearly decipherable; but in 1875 the words here printed in italics were discovered, and evidently form part of the complete stanza :

*Amor vincit mundum  
Pudicitia vincit amorem  
Mors vincit pudicitiam  
Fama vincit mortem  
Tempus vincit famam  
Eternitas omnia vincit.*

Though Giolito's edition of the *Triumphs*, with woodcuts, was not published in Venice till 1545, the subject of the poem was a very favourite one for tapestries before that date, and it is difficult not to believe that in the panel which comes just above the meeting of the kings, on the lower line (which is fourth from the top of the stairway), there is a conscious illustration of Petrarch's verses beginning :

*Quattro destrier via piu che neve bianchi  
Sopr' un carro di foco un garron crudo  
Con arco in mano e con saette a' fianchi.*

The great car is crushing prostrate bodies on the road beneath it. To the right of this is a stage, drawn by elephants, with the fleshless form of Death in front and the figure of a woman blowing a trumpet on the car : "*Fama vincit mortem.*" The second panel from the stair-head shows a great dais drawn by four beasts, with emblems of the growth of Nature interspersed in the design : "*Tempus vincit famam.*" The first represents "*Eternitas*" (or "*Divinitas*") by the three Persons of the Trinity drawn by the lion, the eagle, the ox and the angel of the Evangelists. Once more I must confess that the carvings have more an archæological than an artistic interest. But the case is very different when I come to the greatest treasure of the Maison Bourgtheroulde—the carvings of the Field of the Cloth of Gold in the lower panels on this same wall. Apart from their immense historical value, these carvings rise to a far higher level of art and execution than any others on the walls of this remarkable building, and it is appropriately enough in the actual meeting of the monarchs that the excellence of the sculptor's skill is chiefly displayed. Each king, with his hat in his right hand, bows low in greeting; and it will be noticed that, while Henry is clean shaved, Francis is shown with his beard, inasmuch as he had sworn he would not use a razor till he had met his cousin of England. So anxious were the French ambassadors lest Henry's smooth chin might be the subtle indication of "an



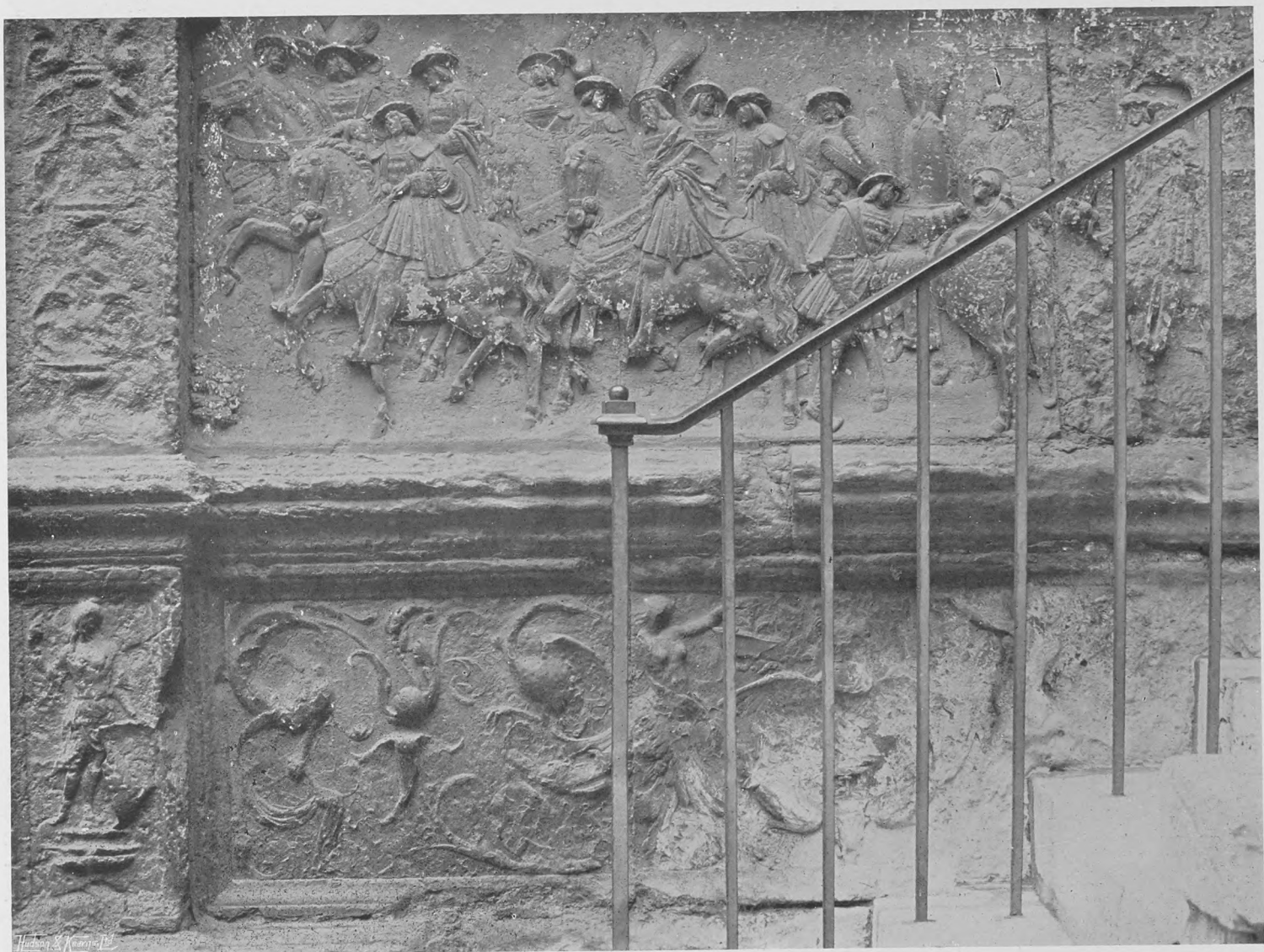
unfriendly act," that the English king had to assure them his affections resided not in his beard, but in his heart. Henry's harness is worked in alternate squares of leopards and roses. Close to him are the Earls of Essex and Northumberland. Francis wears upon his harness the fleurs-de-lys of France. Before him are the Swiss guards under Fleurange, and beside him are Mountjoy and the heralds, with Bourbon carrying the sword, the Master of Horse, the High Admiral and other great nobles of the realm. In the gallant array of figures that follow, in other panels, behind their sovereign, you may realise the truth of Du Bellay's phrase that "many Frenchmen carried the price of woodland, watermill and pasture on their backs." In the panel that has been partly guarded by the stair-rail there is a particularly dignified figure of a courtier mounting his horse as the end of the procession leaves the gates of Ardres, from whose walls the



189.—MAISON BOURGTHEROULDE : THE FISHERMEN.



French ladies are eagerly watching the brave show made by their countrymen. In just the same way the English procession, which is instantly recognisable by the archers who go with it, may be seen issuing from the gates of Guynes, in the last panel on the left, and here, too, the walls are crowded with men and women looking out. To the right of this is Cardinal Wolsey, riding on a mule, with Fisher, Bishop of Rochester; and the strong figure ahead of them, with his mace resting on his thigh, is Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, the motto on whose garter could be clearly read only sixty years ago. The dilapidated condition of these carvings is a disgrace both to England and to France. With careful treatment every single essential detail might still be preserved, the accumulated dust of ages might be removed and the whole encased in glass and saved from further ruin. But neither the Society of Antiquaries in England nor the Bureau des Monuments Historiques in France seem inclined to move in the matter. When



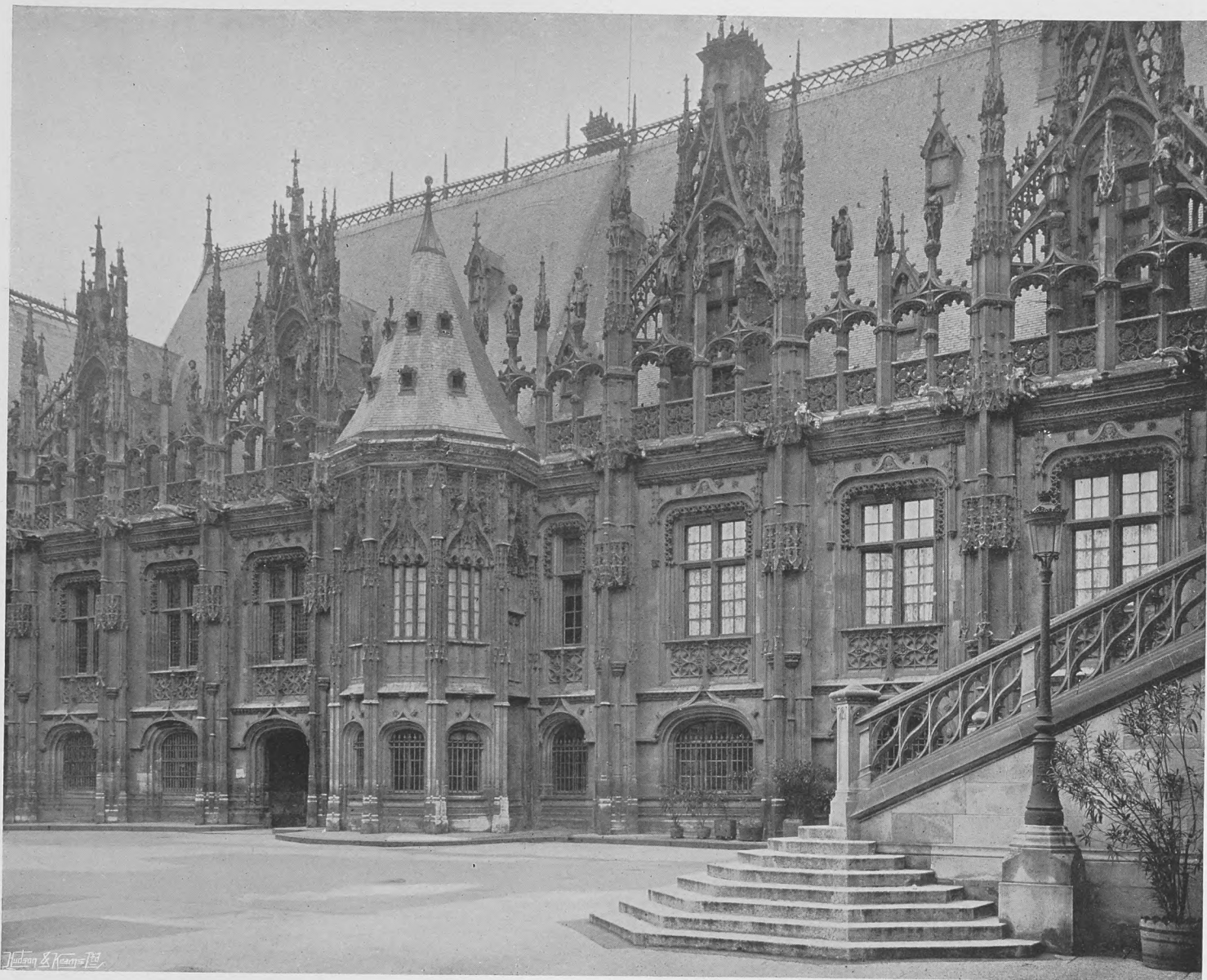
190.—MAISON BOURGTHEROULDE : THE FRENCH CAMP AT ARDRES.

the records on the walls of the Maison Bourgtheroulde have vanished—and that will not take long—the last contemporary sculpture of this historic event will have disappeared, and it will then, too late, be realised that both countries have suffered an irreparable loss. A little of what that loss will mean may be gathered from the description of the scene in the chronicles of Edward Hall, which were first published in 1542; and never was the ingenious magnificence of a monarch so fitly matched by the eloquent enthusiasm of his historian. Those were the days when pageants were not only natural, but well done, and common at the Court; when chivalry was abroad, and jousts and tournaments were not yet dead. They culminated in the dazzling splendours of the Field of the Cloth of Gold.

After the King and Queen of England had reached Calais from Dover they passed to the royal lordship of Guynes on Monday, June 4th, 1520, and were received in a most marvellous palace, with the pillars at its entrance which once stood before the gateway of the Hôtel



Bourgtheroulde, as Hall describes them: "gylte with fine golde and bice, ingrayled with anticke workes, the old God of wyne called Baccus birlyng the wyne . . . over whose hedde was written in letters of Romaine in gold, '*faicte bonne chere quy voudra.*' On the other hand or syde of the gate was set a pyller of auncient Romaine woorke borne with iiii Lyons of golde, the pyllers wrapped in a wrethe of golde curiously wroughte and intrayled, and on the sommet of the sayde pyller stode an image of the blynde God Cupide wyth his bowe and arrowes of love, redy by his semyng to Stryke the young people to love." The tapestries which, I have thought, suggested these carvings in Rouen were also visible at Guynes in great quantities: "riche and marveilous clothes of Arras," says Hall, "wroughte of golde and silke, compassed of many auncient stories, with whiche clothes of Arras every wall and chamber was hanged and



191.—THE PALAIS DE JUSTICE, ROUEN.

all wyndowes so richely covered that it passed all other sightes before seen . . . nothyng lacked of honourable furnishment."

Having told us of the Castle of Guynes, which appears at the left of the line of pictures in the Bourgtheroulde courtyard, the chronicler proceeds to describe the French dwellings at Ardres, which are carved on the extreme right of the series. Here was "a house of solas of sporte of large and mightie compas, which was chiefly sustained by a great mightie maste, wherby the greate ropes and takell strained, the same maste was staided." Herein the coming of the great Wolsey from the English camp caused great commotion. "Of the nobleness of this Cardinall the Frenchmen made bokes, shewyng the triumphant doynges of the Cardinales roialtie . . . of his great Crosses and Pillers borne, the pillowe bere or cace broudered, the two mantelles, with other the Ceremoniall Offices, with greatt and honourable number of bishoppes gevyng their attendaunce"—as you may see in the carvings aforesaid. It may



easily be imagined that a meeting of such complicated importance did not pass off without a few preliminary difficulties. "Monsire Chatelion, a Lord of Fraunce," for instance, "in rigorous and cruell maner threwe doune foure pennons of white and grene which were set up by Richarde Gibson, by commaundement from the kynge for the suer marke or metynge place of the twoo kynges." There were "wordes," of course; but both sides were pacified by



192.—PALAIS DE JUSTICE, CHAMBRE DE LOUIS XII.

Essex, the Earl Marshal. Even when they were each starting, both kings were warned of possible danger by their zealous courtiers. But both were confident of honest treatment, and so went forward gallantly. "Then," cries our enthusiastic Hall, "the Kyng of England shewed hymselfe somedeale forwarde in beautie and personage, the moste goodliest Prince that ever reigned over the Realme of England; his grace was apparelled in a Garment of Clothe of Silver



of Damaske, ribbed wyth Clothe of Golde, so thicke as might bee, the garment was large and plited verie thicke, and canteled of very good intaile, of suche shape and makynge that it was marveilous to beholde. The Courser whiche hys grace rode on was Trapped in a marveilous vesture of a new devised fashion, the Trapper was of fine Golde in Bullion curiously wroughte, pounced and sette with anticke worke of Romaine Figures." With him went Sir Henry Guildford, Master of the Horse, nine young gentlemen in richly embroidered garments mounted on Neapolitan barbs, and the Marquess of Dorset bearing the sword of State; and all these you may see in the Bourgtheroulde carvings.

With no less accuracy are the details of the French side corroborated by Hall, who tells us how "up blewe the Trumpettes, Sagbuttes, Clarions, and all other Minstrelles on both sides . . . and in sight of bothe the nacions and on horsebacke met and embrassed the twoo kynges each other." A little further on he describes the details of our carving: "I then well perceived



193.—ROOF OF PALAIS DE JUSTICE, ROUEN.

thabiliment royall of the Frenche kyng, his garment was a chemew, of clothe of silver, culpond with clothe of golde, of damaske cantell wise, and garded on the bordours with the Burgon bendes, and over that a cloke of broched satten with gold of a purple coloure wrapped about his body traverse, beded from the shulder to the waste, fastened in the lope of the first fold. This said cloke was richely set with pearles and precious stones: this Frenche kyng had on his hed a koyfe of damaske gold set with diamondes . . . and verily of his persone a goodly Prince, stately of countenance, mery of chere, broune coloured, great iyes, high nosed, bigge lipped, faire breasted and shoulders, small legges and long fete." But I must linger no more over these fascinating pages, which go on to tell of those two trees that were set up on Saturday, June 9th, "the one called *Aubespine* and the other called the *Framboister*, whyche is in English the Hathorne which was Henry, and the Raspis berry for Fraunces"; of the great joust and tourney in which Sir William Kingston, Sir Richard Garningham, Sir Giles Capell, Master Nicholas Carew and Master Anthony Knivet did valiantly for the English, and King Henry VIII



himself broke a spear on Monsieur Grandeville's head ; of Lord Howard, the Duke of Norfolk's son, and his eleven companions dressed in crimson satin " full of flames of gold " ; and of the farewell made by Francis to the English sovereign when Henry left the field for Calais on June 24th.

The builders of the Maison Bourgtheroulde put so much history upon its sculptured walls that they seem to have shrunk from possible comparisons, and deliberately to have left no story of their own. All I know of them is that they inherited the fortune of one Guillaume le Roux, who was no relation of the architect, but a councillor of the Perpetual Exchequer created in Rouen by Louis XII in 1499, and was married in 1486, when he may have begun this palace for his bride. But it was not finished until 1531, because the Phoenix of Eleanor of Austria shows on its carvings beside her Royal husband's Salamander ; and it could not have begun to receive the best of its external decoration until 1520, the year of the Field of the Cloth of Gold, the preservation of which, in fitly sumptuous memorials, seems to have provided the sole object of the existence of this building.

I have said that the founder of the riches of the house of Bourgtheroulde was a councillor in the Court established by Louis XII in Rouen. The permanent home of that august assembly is worthy both of its great traditions and its Royal builder. Its west wing, now the Salle des Pas Perdus, was originally the old common Hall of the Merchants in the Clos des Juifs, with a roof that looks, from withinside, like the upturned hull of some great ocean galley, and a fine sweep to its entrance stairway, which has at last been replaced where first it stood after the same architect who ruined the west front of St. Ouen had worked his will upon the Palais de Justice also. It is the main building, exactly opposite the courtyard entrance from the Rue aux Juifs, that is the chief glory of the whole, with the lovely octagonal turret, jutting out from the line of flaming window-crests, where King Louis had a circular chamber for his private use. Behind it is the Cour d'Assises, with a splendidly carved ceiling in panels of polished woodwork. Among the pinnacled tracery and fretwork that rises before the steep slope of the roof are the arms of France supported by two stags, to decorate the masterpiece of Roger Ango and Rouland Leroux. The eastern wing on the right side of the entrance is modern ; but in spite of all it has suffered, the Palais de Justice of Rouen, as a whole, is the finest civic building of its kind in Europe. Beneath its gorgeous architecture are the prisons and dungeons of the High Court. From them was conducted the prisoner who knelt in the little chapel of the western hall before he went out to carry the Shrine of St. Romain in the great procession of his pardon on Ascension Day. That procession, with all it signifies of conflict between ecclesiastical and legal powers, of religious charity, of superstitious traditions, of reckless crime throughout the hot-blooded centuries when the Privilege was chiefly famous—that procession must ever be the main theme which every traveller will carry away from Rouen, whether he visits the Maison Jeanne d'Arc, or the Maison Bourgtheroulde, or the Palais de Justice. For in it is summed up the history of the town—Roman, Norman, French, English and French again ; and there is not a stone that remains of the Rouen of the sixteenth century which does not " cry out of the wall " some noble or pathetic fragment of that long romantic story.



CHAPTER XIII.

BLOIS, LOIR-ET-CHER.\*

IN a building of so great a size and of such voluminous historical associations I make no excuse for directing the attention of my reader immediately to the most exquisite gem of architecture it contains—the Open Staircase, which was also the scene of the most dramatic events in the long and complicated story of the Château of Blois. That story begins as far back as the interview of the Emperor Louis with his son Lothair in 834, in the fortress which then replaced upon this legendary rock the camp of earlier Romans. From Eudes, the first Count of Blois, who died in 865, the place eventually came into the hands of the famous Thibault le Tricheur, a notorious character in the early records of the Loire Valley ; and of its lords in the tenth and eleventh centuries there are still relics left in the two round towers at each end of the wing of Gaston of Orleans, which faces the visitor on his entrance into the courtyard. The smaller one is enclosed in the masonry which joins the northern end of that wing to the western extremity of the façade of Francis I ; the larger is on the edge of the terrace to the south of Gaston's building, outside its main constructions, and was used as an observatory by Catherine de' Medici. The chapel on the south side of the courtyard, though



194.—EXTERIOR FACADE OF FRANCIS I.

\* Monument Historique de France.



finished by later masons, was begun here in the days of these early counts, and beneath the thirteenth century Parliament hall are sub-structures which are as old as any other part of the castle. The eastern end of this hall is immediately on your right at the eastern corner of the entrance façade containing the statue of Louis XII, its builder. The castle was sold by Guy de Châtillon, heir of the first Counts of Blois, to Louis of Orleans, brother of the King of France, towards the end of the fourteenth century, and with that sale the real interest of

the place begins.

With so slight an introduction to its shadowy past, you may stand in the courtyard and call up the memories that follow one another, quick and fast, upon that haunted space: Valentina Visconti, daughter of Gian Galeazzo, Duke of Milan, and Duchess of Touraine by right of her husband, Louis of Orleans the lord of Blois; Dunois, the famous bastard of Orleans; Jeanne d'Arc, whose banner was consecrated in Saint-Sauveur; Charles of Orleans, the prisoner of Agincourt, the ballad-writer of old France; Villon, the bitter poet of the misery and crime outside a fifteenth century Court; Cæsar Borgia; the Archduke Philip of Austria, who saw the entrance-wing of Louis XII when it was new, and walked upon the vanished "Perche aux Bretons"



195.—ENTRANCE: STATUE OF LOUIS XII.

with the latter's Breton Queen; Francis I, who paid for the Open Staircase; Du Bellay and Ronsard, poets of a very different lyre from Villon's; Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland; Brantôme, watching the pretty ladies and taking notes about their little weaknesses; Catherine de' Medici, white-faced and full of plots; Queen Margot, the lovely bride of Henry of Navarre; Jeanne d'Albret, his serious mother, talking with the Huguenot Coligny; D'Epernon,

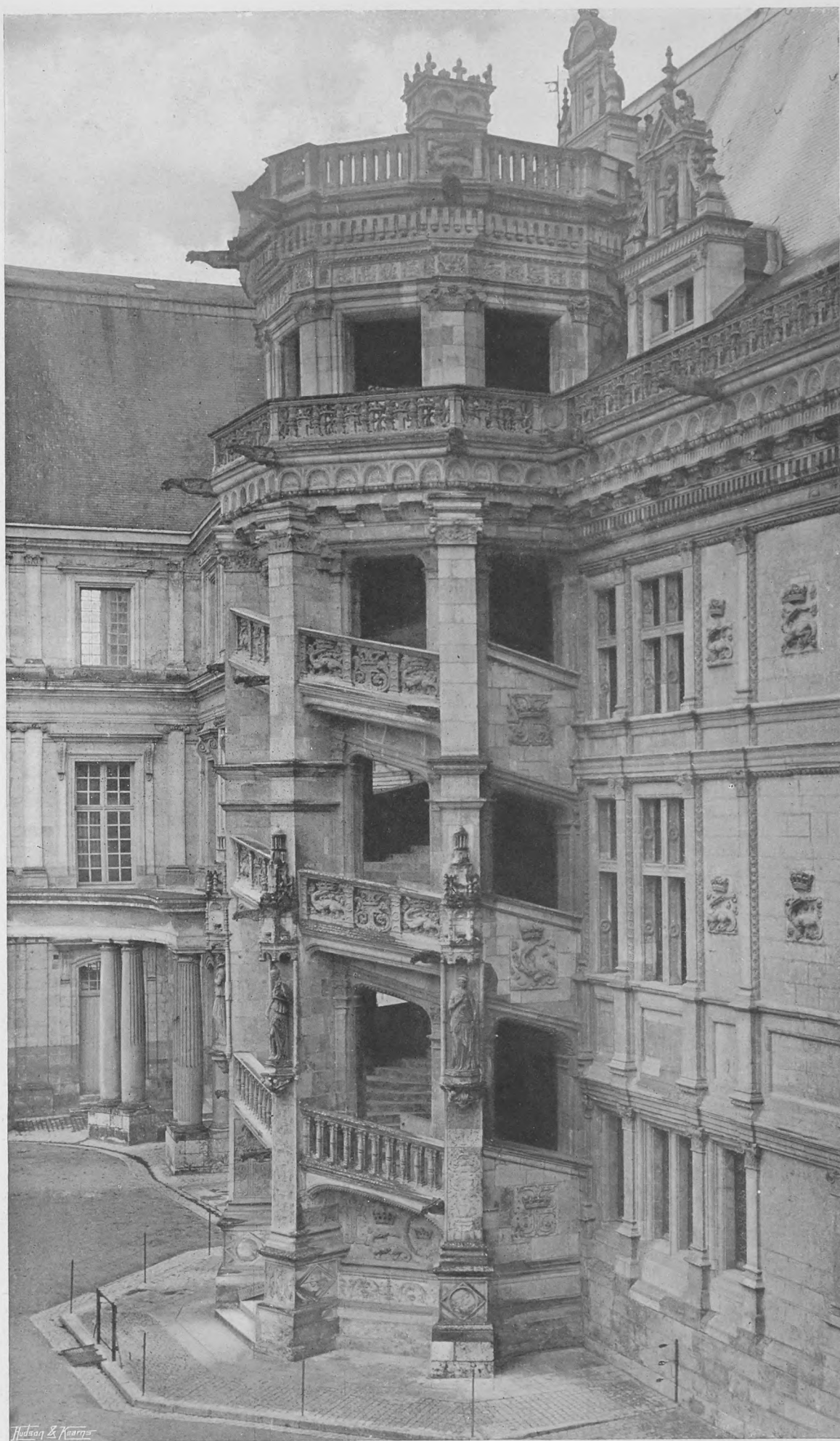


Caylus, Bussy d'Amboise, Joyeuse, and the other Mignons of the Quarante Cinq; Mme. la Duchesse de Montpensier, with her wicked little scissors hanging by the skirt of the Guises' colours; the lovely Mme. de Sauves, Marquise de Noirmoutier; Guise, who was murdered behind the Open Staircase; Henry III, who ordered the assassination and was stabbed himself before he could get back to Paris; Marie de' Medici, escaping painfully out of a back window; Gaston of Orleans, the Plotter, with his daughter La Grande Mademoiselle; John Evelyn, uttering decorous observations; Louis XIV, very much bored by country residences; Louise de la Vallière, making soft eyes at the Vicomte de Bragelonne—and then, decay and ruin for two hundred years from 1660. The place is more like its old self to-day than when Arthur Young saw it in 1787, a few years before the Revolution pulled down Louis XII's statue and filled the castle



196.—GARGOYLES ON OUTER FACADE OF FRANCIS I.





197.—THE EASTERN SIDE OF THE STAIRCASE.

with soldiers. But the outstanding beauty of it all remains what it has ever been since 1520—that marvelous Open Staircase in the wing of Francis I, which is the first thing a visitor will notice as he looks round that irregular courtyard, so full of different styles and various associations, and yet so charming and impressive. I must now turn to the staircase itself, and this with a very peculiar pleasure, for the photographs so artistically and beautifully taken by Mr. Frederick Evans for these pages constitute the most complete record of this amazing structure which has ever been published in this or any other country. No records of the building of this wing exist, with the exception of a receipt signed by Raymon Phelippeaux, master-builder, of Blois, on July 5th, 1516, for three thousand livres tournois to him paid over by Jacques Viart, official treasurer of the county, towards the expenses of

certain buildings and repairs then being carried out in the chateau by the orders of Francis I. This document was preserved in the archives of the Baron du Joursanvault, part of which were purchased in England and part by the town of Blois, which took some three thousand manuscripts.



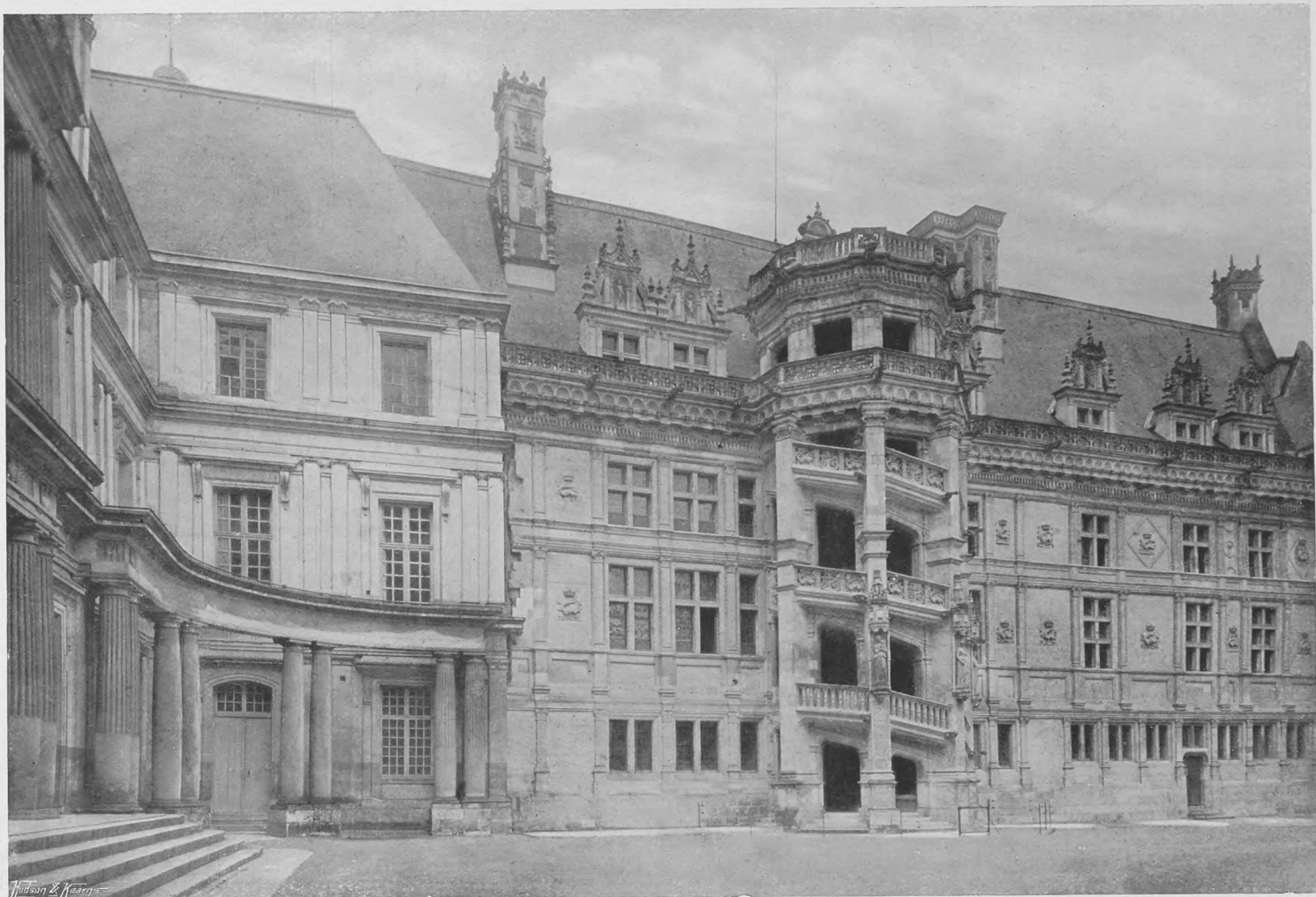
Restrained, and full of well-proportioned dignity, the main wall of the inner façade of Francis I is composed in the simple scheme of three rows of pilasters, placed one above the other, with flat, continuous bands marking the position of each floor, and crowned salamanders (the badge of Francis) carved in relief to fill the spaces above the ground floor. The dormer windows, even the chimney-stacks in the roof, are more highly decorated than anything beneath them, except the lovely line of sculptured cornice which has been compared to the unrolled jewellery of a lady's bracelet. The cornice has its special task, as will be seen. But the main wall, as far as its position in the decorative scheme is concerned, is chiefly a very carefully thought out background. Upon it the splendours of the Open Staircase are thrown into exquisite relief. At first this beautiful construction seems to stand free, breaking up the even succession of pilasters, and their perpendicular descent upon the wall behind, with the bold projection of its octagonal lines. But above, it is clasped within the wide scheme of the whole mass by the broad cornice, which springs outward in a continuous line from the main wall and gathers every various curve



198.—EXTERIOR OF THE OPEN STAIRCASE.



within its strengthening bands. Still higher, among the pointed tongues of the rich dormer windows, the eight-sided crown of the whole staircase rises unimpeded in the air, surrounded by the carven heads of peering gargoyles. What impresses the beholder first, in its constructive elements, is the amazing blend of order with unrestraint, of vital symmetry with wayward freedom. The effect of the cornice is entirely to satisfy you that the stairway is an integral part of the whole building. The sheer, strong lines of the columns, ending in rich Corinthian capitals, entirely convince you of their solidity of support. Yet the bands that mark the floor spaces behind seem to have disappeared. In their place a balustrade rises in lines of uneven, apparently of unco-ordinated vigour, from the soil towards the roof. These lines do not follow the bands upon the wall behind; they are not even parallel to each other; yet they are intimately supported by the columns that emphasise their main angles, and they radiate a sense of life and growth that seems to defy analysis. Within them is contained a structure as different as they are from the main wall, and even more pregnant with that strange,



199.—NORTH-WESTERN ANGLE OF COURTYARD.

elusive charm which belongs especially to natural forms instinct with Nature's primal forces, a charm that announces itself entirely apart from the precise measurements and solid masses of an orthodox architecture that is concerned with heavy stonework and with lifeless tools.

Pass in by the larger archway that faces to the south-west and look upwards to where the central shaft swings high into the air like some great twisted water flag that rises from a pond. You will confess that nothing on the outside ever prepared you for this marvellous sight. It will be well to emphasise its beauty by comparison before we go further. Immediately on the right of the entrance vault of the courtyard of the château is the "Grand Escalier" of the apartments of Louis XII, contained in the square tower, that juts out from the south wall of the Salle des Etats. There is not much that is either very original or beautiful in its exterior. Within is such a spiral staircase as you may see in many a hundred of the castles of old France. The placing and design of the windows exhibit no special feature. The steps are mere square-cut triangles. The handrail is very slightly developed from the primeval rope that once circled

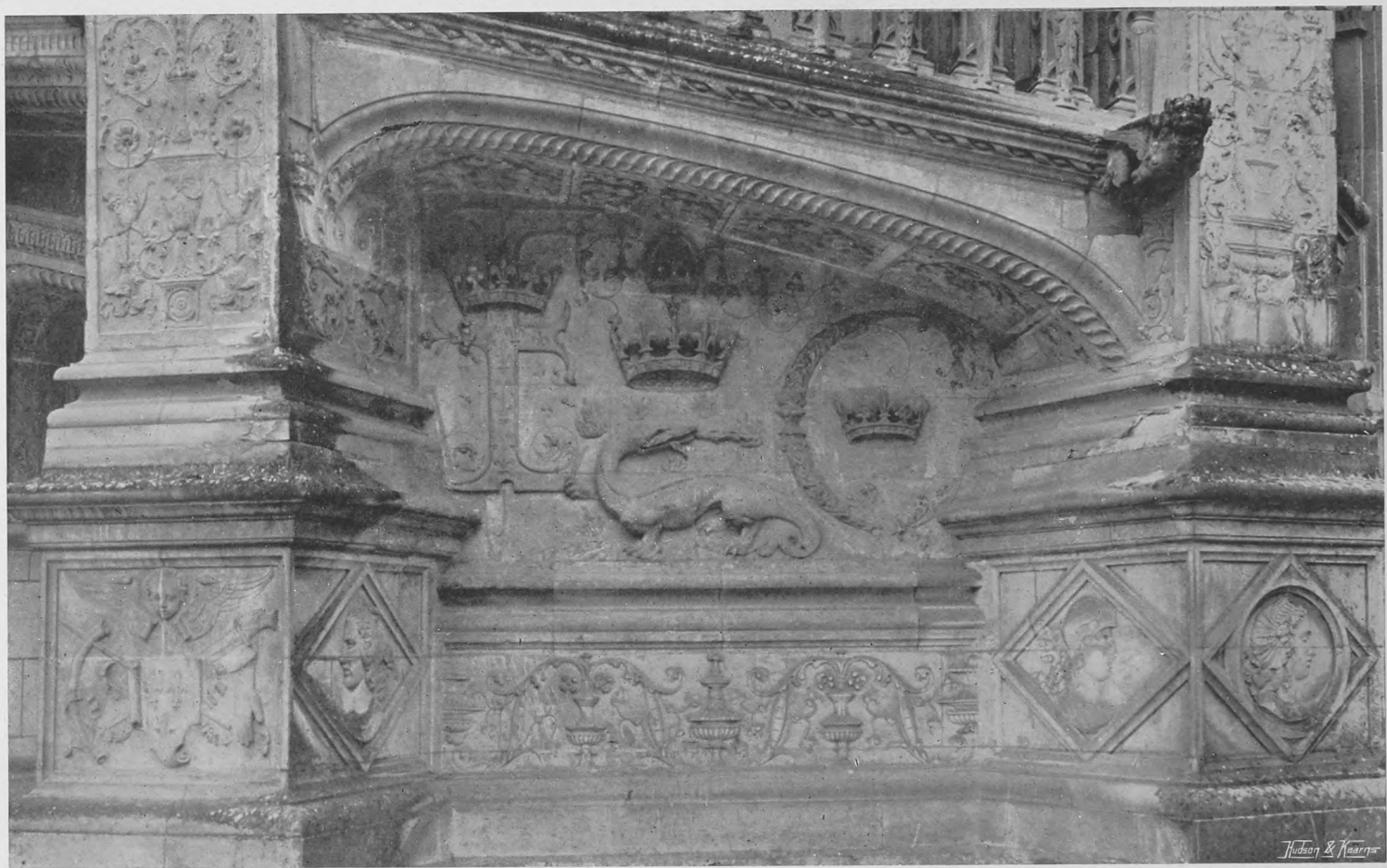




200.—THE GALLERY OF LOUIS XII.



the central shaft as a guard for the left hand of anyone ascending. The shaft itself is plainly and well decorated with a series of rising colonnettes that are both adequate and appropriate, but the vaulting is of the plainest possible description. When you have walked the few yards of intervening space from this example of late fifteenth century work, itself a great development from the primitive corkscrew in a tube of the old feudal donjons, you come upon the interior of the open stairway begun after 1515. The change is breathless. It is not solely to be explained by the passage of so few short years. It is not merely due to the development under Francis I of an Italian influence that had begun here with Valentina Visconti. It is the difference between average excellence and the creativeness of genius. Perhaps the first contrast that strikes a visitor who cares to draw this parallel will be that the older staircase is a right hand spiral, which involves the fact that its central shaft is always on your left hand as you ascend, and that you keep turning to the left as you go upwards, whereas the sixteenth century construction is a left hand spiral. This involves the more convenient plan of keeping the central shaft always on your right as you move upwards. And further, it may be surmised



201.—THE SALAMANDER OF FRANCIS I.

that possibly the architect preferred the visitor approaching from the courtyard entrance to see lines that were rising instead of falling ; or that he wished the entrance to be on the left hand side, so as to be sheltered from the view of the larger part of the courtyard.

Then look at the actual steps. They are not straight, as in the older instance. Not only is the larger portion of the outside of the tread cut on a slender, swelling curve, but at the point where each step meets the central shaft that curve is swiftly reversed, with an amazing effect of vital yet unstudied grace. They remind me of the way the petals of a rose grow outwards from its centre, with the same subtle reverse curve at the point of their attachment. They look like leaves encircling with their natural growth the central stalk from which they draw their nourishment. The delicately modelled colonnettes that rise around this midmost shaft now frame Renaissance panels carved in very light relief, which (like other parts of the exterior) may have been finished later than the main constructive lines of the design ; but set between the capitals of each pair of slender pillars is a shell, broadly carved with light and shadow, with no mere imitation of exact form, but with the splendidly sculptural treatment only possible when



inspired by a fine artistic feeling for their effect in this exact position. Even more inspiring in its buoyant sense of movement, in the vivacity and sensuous strength of rising coils, is the magnificent handrail, which is developed to its fullest possibilities of varied beauty. For it is no longer a plain rope of stone, as in the older building. The main great curve of it grows upwards with two delicate reflections of itself between the bases of the colonnettes above, and yet a fourth deep shadow of it underneath, which emphasises and protects the curved attachment of each rising step.

I have but space to mention a very little more about the details of this extraordinary work. The gargoyles at its angles have always struck me as being distinctively French ; and the lovely



202.—WESTERN CORNICE ON INNER FACADE OF FRANCIS I.

statuettes set round about the lower storey are also of French origin. Anyone who knows the Fontaine des Innocents, or the Diane Chasseresse, or the nymphs of Anet, will be reminded of Jean Goujon's work by these figures at Blois, with the long lithe limbs, the small breasts set high on the body, the elaborate headdress and its pendant ornament, the bracelet on the slender arm, that are so characteristic of his style elsewhere. But I should like to know the name of him who carved that salamander between the statues and the main wall, a living beast that might have crawled out of a French Gothic cathedral, with hind and fore feet gripping the stone, with



spinal column curving firmly down from neck to tail, with gruesome warts upon his scaly back. The mass of multitudinous detail is not the first thing that strikes you; and rightly so, for the main lines of the design are those that capture all your senses instantly. But as you walk slowly upwards the stone seems to grow in all graceful shapes beneath your eyes. In every corner delicate patterns, gentle curves, or royal emblems glow on the fretted surface. The doors alone are a delight.

I have left them fast closed until now. The trace of many a tragedy lurks behind them; and their ghosts may not be held in thrall much longer. The shadows on those lovely steps grow red with every setting sun.



204.—A PANEL.



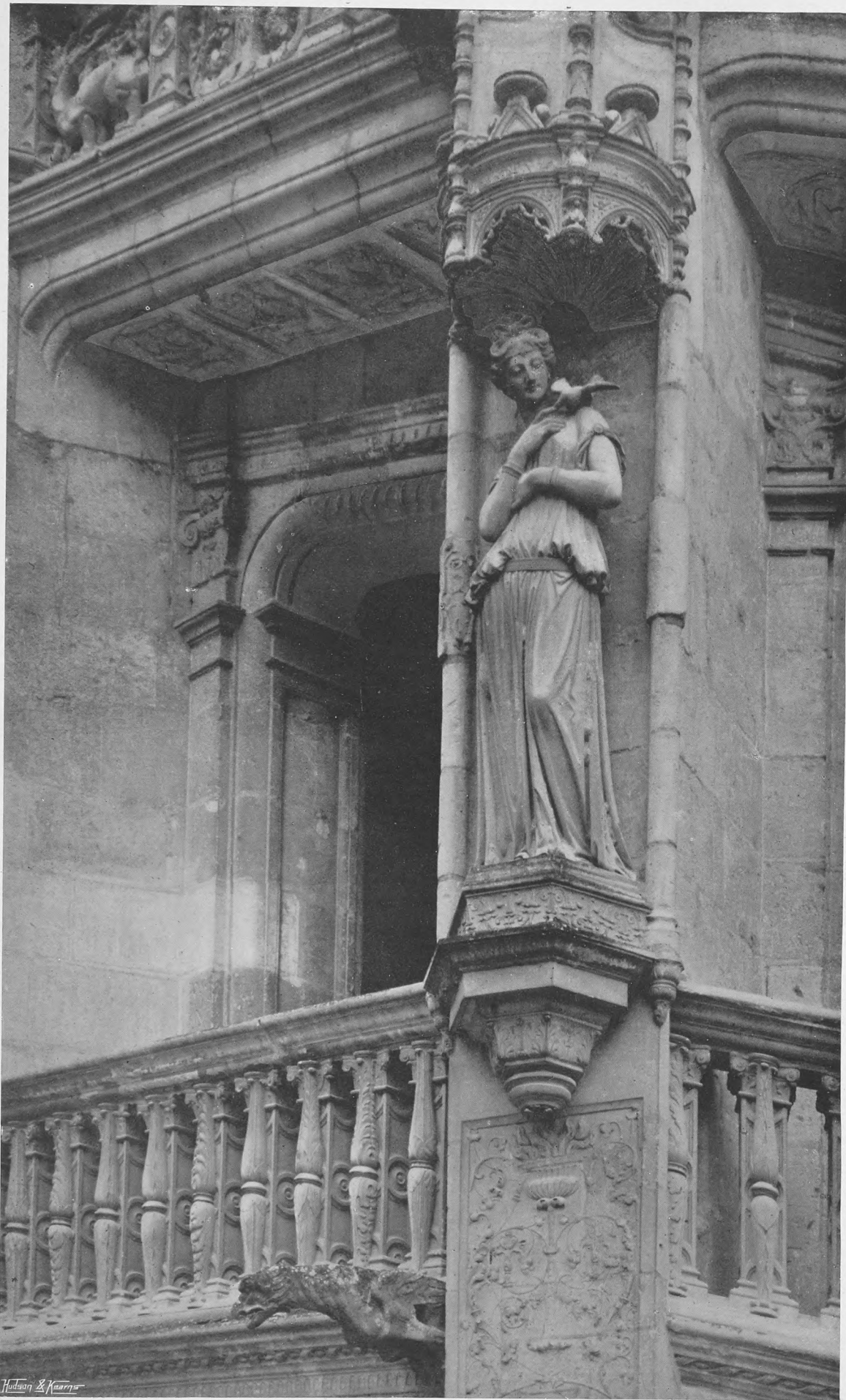
203.—A GARGOYLE.

I have already given a very incomplete catalogue of some of the celebrities who have been connected with a monument that is historic in more senses than the merely official one; and from its length it will be obvious that I can only select a few typical events out of a mass of material if this book is to be kept within reasonable bounds. I will choose, then, the visit of the future Emperor, Charles V, in 1501, the meeting of the States General of 1588, and the murder of the Duc de Guise, for these can be connected in the visitor's mind with the wing of Louis XII, with the Salle des Etats, or Parliament Hall, and with the wing of Francis I respectively.

The plan of the courtyard will give the reader an idea of the relative position and size of the various buildings mentioned, and aid him to place aright the details Mr. Evans has so beautifully photographed for these pages.



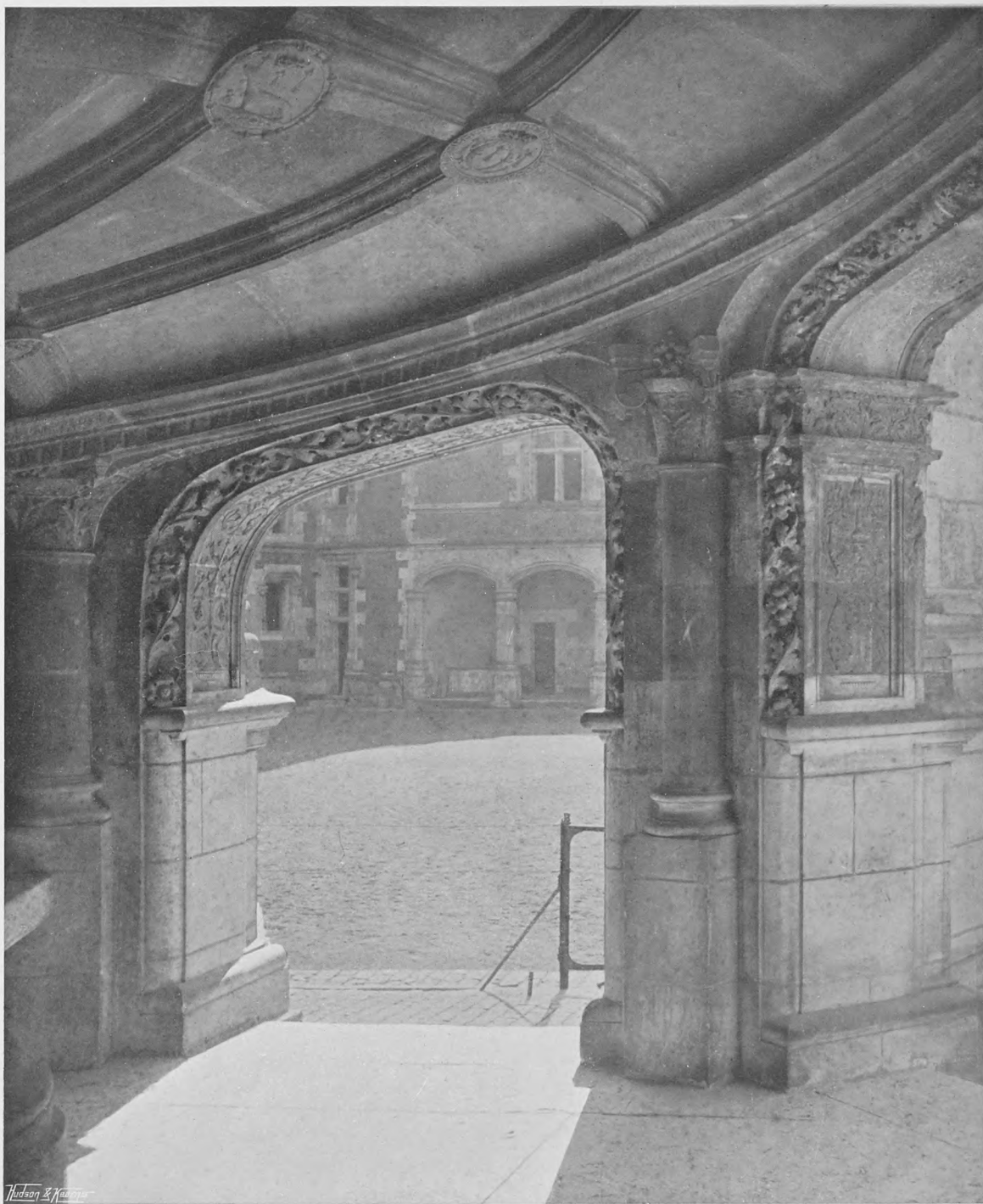
With the visit of Louis of Orleans and Valentina Visconti in 1404, Blois received its first impression both of the charm and of the tragedy of Italy—of Italy, “that old Enchantress with the fatal gift of beauty”—of Italy, that was to cost France so dear in blood and treasure, to sober the originality of French native art in the process of spreading the ideals of the Renaissance, and to give the throne one of its ablest, most unscrupulous and most ruthless queens. When Louis of Orleans held the old fortress, his golden fleur-de-lys, upon an azure ground, floated above the living-rooms on the left side of the courtyard from the entrance, and very little of them now remains. But in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris are many of the books which Valentina Visconti read and bequeathed to Poet Charles; her *Book of Hours*, and her *Treatise of the Heart and Soul*, illustrated by Angelot de la Presse, her *Romance of Lancelot* and *Æsop's Fables*, her *Roman de la Rose*, her husband's *Dit Royal par Jehan Froissart*, his *Marco Polo*, and many more. His murder in 1407 sent the widow back to Blois again, in sorrow that ended only with her life a year later. She fortified the castle strongly, as she might well do, with Burgundy for an enemy, and one of her greatest consolations—curiously enough—was the promise of her husband's bastard, John, who was to



205.—STATUE BY JEAN GOUJON.



be famous as the Count Dunois. Two years after her death, her son Charles married Bonne d'Armagnac as his second wife, and the intestine struggle began which weakened France until she was overthrown at Agincourt. For twenty-five years after that disaster Charles of Orleans was a prisoner in England. He came back to Blois with all the romance of the last generation round him. Few princes have been so loved alike for the associations of his name and for a gentle, kindly, dreamy personality which seemed to have been born in a forgotten age of chivalry and never to have grown out of it. The indirect cause of his freedom had been that marvellous episode of Joan of Arc. In April, 1429, she had just left



206.—WING OF FRANCIS I.; COURTYARD FROM THE OPEN STAIRCASE.

Chinon for Blois, where the Duc d'Alençon was collecting a convoy of provisions for the relief of Orleans, and all the great captains of France marched to her banner: Boussac, La Hire, Xaintrilles, Gaucourt and many more. The Archbishop of Rheims blessed her standard before the altar of St. Sauveur, and from Blois she finally despatched the famous letter written at Poitiers on Tuesday, March 22nd: "Roy d'Angleterre, faites raison au roy du ciel de son sang royal. . . . Roy d'Angleterre, si ainsi ne le faites, je suis chef de guerre, en quelque lieu que j'atteindray vos gens en France, s'ils ne veulent obéir, je les feray issir, veuillent ou non

. . . allez-vous-en en vostre pays de par Dieu. . . ." And on the back of the letter was written: "Entendez les nouvelles de Dieu et de la Pucelle. Au duc de Betfort, qui se dit régent du royaume de France pour le roy d'Angleterre." On April 28th she marched out of Blois, across the plains of the Sologne, with her six thousand men, the most inexplicable maid in history. Charles of Orleans languished still in foreign prisons for a few years longer. In 1431, writing from Ampthill Castle, he appointed the great Dunois as governor of Blois. In 1433 he wrote from Donington Castle, concerning one of the gate wardens. In 1437 René of Provence, the Troubadour-King, was being entertained in Blois. At last, in 1440, the Duke of



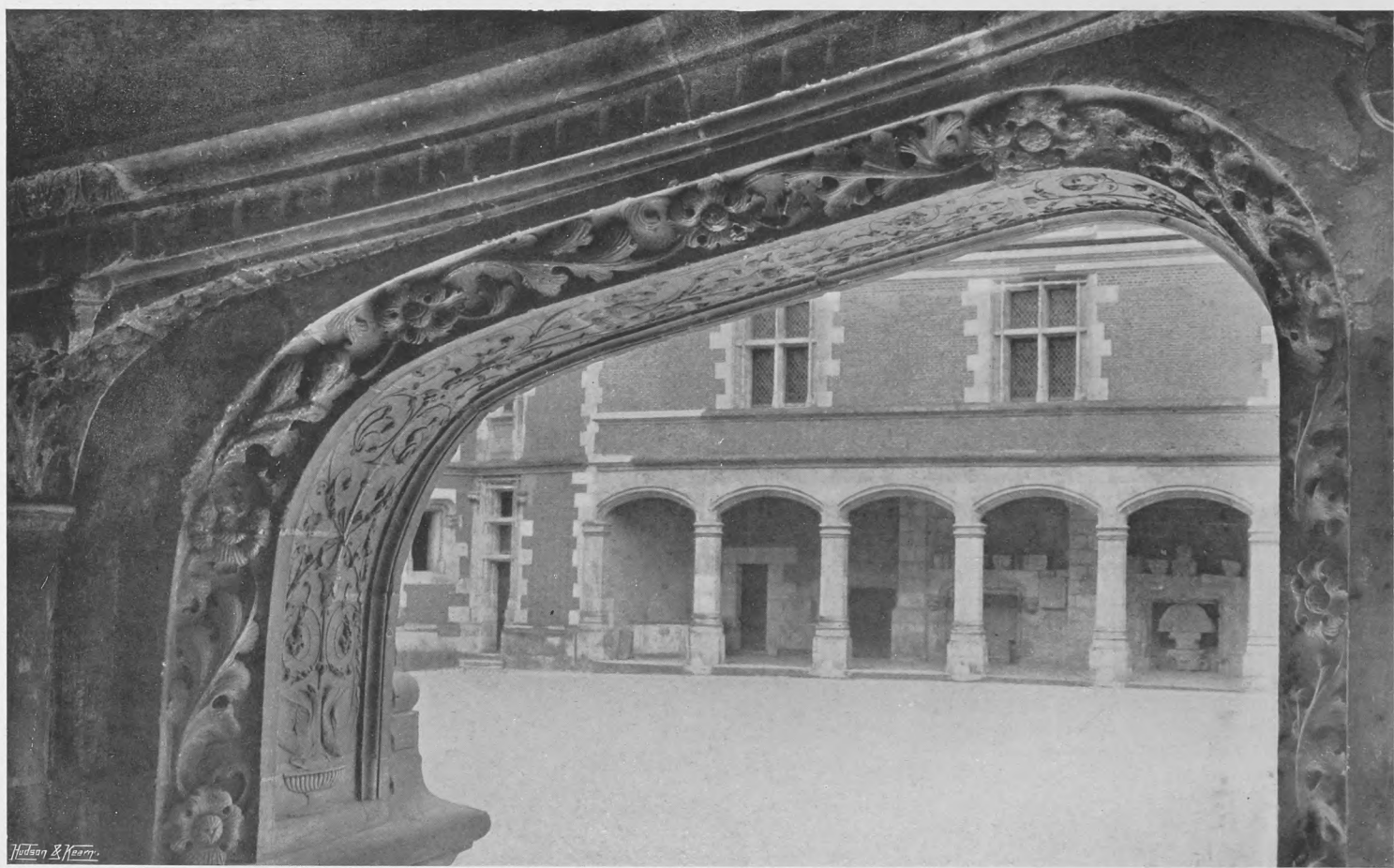


207.—THE TOPMOST PARAPET.



Burgundy, son of the murderer of Louis of Orleans, interceded for the freedom of the son of Louis, and Charles came back to Blois in February. All that is left of the rooms he inhabited is the gallery of pillars on the left-hand side of the courtyard from the entrance; and it is probable that he began the gardens of the château. He certainly added to its library. But his greatest contribution to the history both of Blois and France was the son presented to him in his old age by Mary of Cleves, a son who was forthwith betrothed by King Louis XI to his own daughter, Jeanne de France. She never lived to be his Queen.

After the death of Poet Charles, this son, who was to be Louis XII of France, grew up at Blois with all the promise of his father's popularity and more than his father's vigour, both of character and body. During the reign of Charles VIII, who had been left by Louis XI to the guardianship of his sister, Anne de Beaujeu, the young Duke of Orleans showed unequivocal signs of restlessness and impatient ambition. But nothing came of them, and they were



208.—CARVING OF AN ARCH.

finally crushed at the battle of St. Aubin du Cormier, after which Louis became a firm friend of Charles VIII.

In April, 1498, news reached Blois that Charles VIII had died at Amboise. The Duke of Orleans became Louis XII. He had never opposed the dead King's personality, as he showed very conclusively in the negotiations for the marriage with Anne of Brittany; but he had fought against Anne de Beaujeu, the Regent, and he had become, as the greatest of the nobles near the throne, the head of their united opposition to that throne in the Breton wars; so that he was probably quite sincere both in his grief for the reckless, ugly, dreaming Charles, and in his famous saying to La Trémouille, that "The King of France has nothing to do with avenging the Duke of Orleans." He gave his predecessor on the throne a noble funeral and married the widow; and the affection with which all France welcomed his accession was reflected in the public enthusiasm with which the celebrated "Ordonnance de Blois" was passed at the assembly of the States General held in the Castle Hall early in 1499. Before the end of that year he had returned from his Italian campaigns to welcome Anne of Brittany and his young daughter, Claude.

It was in connection with this royal little lady that the negotiations were begun with the Archduke Philip of Austria which resulted in his visit to Blois with the young Prince who was





209.—ENTRANCE TO THE OPEN STAIRCASE.



afterwards to be the Emperor Charles V, the sinister opponent in European politics both of Francis I and of our own Henry VIII. Anne of Brittany was determined to marry off her daughter into the house of Austria. Her own early engagement to Maximilian, and the effect that episode created on her mind, are the sole excuses for an ambition that must have proved fatal to the future destinies of France. She was an inveterate matchmaker, and when her sentiments interfered with the larger policy of the kingdom, she was invariably wrong. But

this was her one serious defect; and it explains all her feminine animosity against Louise of Savoy, the mother of that young François d'Angoulême who was eventually to marry this same Claude and to make her Queen of France. But at Blois these matters do not seem to have troubled anybody very much in the winter of 1501.

The wing built by Louis XII, which contains his statue on horseback over the entrance gate of the château (a replica of the statue destroyed by the Revolution), was just finished when the Archduke Philip arrived, with the badge of the Porcupine upon it which Louis had taken from his father, Charles of Orleans. Among the gold and blue and purple that shone from floor to roof-tree, this portico displayed a Remembrance of Death which was characteristic of the time—the Danse Macabre that may still be seen in the Aître St. Maclou at Rouen, and in Holbein's wood-cuts, those terrible imaginations of ever-present Death, seizing the tiara of the Pope, or



210.—SHAFT SEEN FROM THE ROOMS OF CATHERINE DE' MEDICI.

the crown of the Emperor, and hurrying to the tomb the Kings and Queens and all the great ones of the earth. At Blois they paid as little heed to the grim frescoes as to the politics of Europe, when news of the arrival of the Archduchess at Saint-Dié was brought by courier to Blois. She rode on a white hackney in a robe of crimson, followed by the Duchess of Vendôme, who had gone out from Blois to meet her with a company of ladies clad in black velvet all on horseback, while a long line of litters for the suite and of attendant guards stretched





211.—THE BALUSTRADE.



out upon the road behind them. A loud blast from the royal trumpeters announced the arrival of the Archduke at the forts of the château, where the Archers of the Guard in silver-broidered cloaks were standing ready. From the gateway to the door of the great staircase in the right-hand corner near the Salle des Etats the Swiss Guards lined the courtyard, holding torches in their hands. In the great drawing-room above, the King was sitting in a chair of state upon a velvet carpet. Beside him stood young François d'Angoulême, Georges d'Amboise, the cardinal who built Chaumont, Florimond Robertet, builder of the Hôtel d'Alluye, and M. de Brienne. The whole scene has been described by an eye-witness, whose careful chronicles are preserved in the archives of France. The Archduke took off his hat on entering and made three bows to the King of France. At the second the King took off his hat, and at the third the King embraced him. The Archduchess was received at the gate by the Duchess of Nevers, Mlle. de Montpensier, Mme. de Rohan and many other of the Queen's ladies, who conducted her forthwith to the King's apartment. There, after asking permission from the Archbishop of Cordova (for Joan of Castille was a thorough Spaniard), she embraced the King and the little Francis of Angoulême, and was soon free to go to the Queen's rooms. Anne of Brittany received her in a chair of state near the fireplace, with the Prince of Orange and other high dignitaries and ladies round her, among whom were the Duchess of Alençon, Mlle. de Foix and the Countess of Dunois. After due reverences on each side she moved away again, and met Mlle. de Tournon at the door, who carried the little Princess Claude, with Mme. d'Angoulême and the Duchess of Valentinois behind her, and a bevy of four-and-twenty young girls as her escort. But the little Princess was crying so bitterly that nothing ceremonial happened, and she was carried back again to her royal nursery, which was hung with a tapestry full of "little personages in the country, with animals, and writings, very beautiful," next to the Queen's room, which was hung with a tapestry of battles and of fighting, with a cowl of cloth of gold above the chimney; and in her bedroom the walls were covered with a pattern of strange birds and beasts and men of foreign countries, and cloth of gold round the bed, with a hood to it of crimson damask. In the rooms set apart for the Archduke the tapestry represented the Trojan War and the history of Alexander the Great, and from the ceiling hung two great chandeliers of silver, bearing four flambeaux crosswise upon a great chain of silver. The cloth of gold upon the walls was striped with red and black embroidery, and the cloth of gold above their beds was lined with pure white damask, which hung above sheets of the finest Holland linen, with curtains of red and yellow taffetas. At the corner of the bed was a carved chair of Italian work, with a cushion of cloth of gold and fringes of gold and silver lace, and another chair of the same design stood by the chimney corner. In the retiring-room were hangings of crimson velvet embroidered with K. and A., for Karolus and Anna, and many cushions were spread about the floor covered in green velvet. Beyond was yet another apartment hung with crimson satin embroidered in gold and orange with the arms of Brittany. Beneath the Archduke's room slept the Seigneur de Bourbon, whose walls were covered with flames of crimson satin sewn with gold, and the embroidery of his bed represented five helmeted lions all set in seed pearls.

It was a fast day, so the religious King feasted alone on bread and water; but about seven o'clock a service of sweetmeats was sent up with great ceremony to the distinguished visitor. The procession was led by the royal maître d'hôtel, who was followed by six pages clad in yellow damask trimmed with crimson velvet, each holding a wax candle in a golden candlestick. Behind them walked Mme. de Bourbon with a great case of gold in which were many smaller boxes of various comfits. Then came Mme. de Nevers with knives and forks in a gold case. The Duchess of Valentinois and Mlle. de Foix each carried a comfit-box of chased silver-gilt. Behind them came six gentlemen-in-waiting carrying preserves and cakes in golden jars. The procession was closed, significantly enough, by the Queen's doctor bearing—not a pill-box and a black draught, but a supply of candles. Yet another company of ladies and gentlemen came upstairs with sheets and towels and warming pans and jugs, four mirrors in chased silver, sponges and soap, three jointed candlesticks, snuffers with red velvet round their handles, and many papers of pins, also some combs, more spare candles, a towel of soft damask for the feet and smaller towels of Holland linen for the face and head. At last the Archduke and the Archduchess got safely to bed, and there I must leave them. Nothing much more of





212.—CENTRAL SHAFT.





213.—THE CURVING STEPS.



importance happened, and nothing political was discussed. A little romance among the maids of honour is the only relief to the somewhat pompous, if not ponderous, amusements of the Court ; for the King of Hungary, after long hesitation between the rival charms of two fair ladies, at last made up his mind to ask the hand of Anne of Foix, and sent the Cardinal of Amboise and Pierre de Rohan to the lady, who married a Hungarian count by proxy and forthwith held all the state of a Queen in the château, much to the distress of the young Count Dunois, who nourished a hopeless passion for her.

In 1509 the King married Margaret of Angoulême (sister of Francis, heir to the throne) to Charles of Alençon, and the wedding ceremonies were even more splendid than those of the Marquis of Montferrat a little while beforehand ; for the young Francis held the lists against all comers in the tournament, dressed in white satin, and there was loud cheering from the whole company at his success. In 1510 Machiavelli was in the château ; but his presence is



214.—COLUMN IN GALLERY OF LOUIS XII.



215.—COLUMN IN GALLERY OF LOUIS XII.

completely obscured by the arrival of another daughter, Renée, to the Queen. In January, 1514, Anne of Brittany was dead. Her "Perche aux Bretons" in the castle courtyard has now vanished, with the lovely pavilion she built in the gardens of which she was so fond ; and a right royal funeral was given her to celebrate the bearing of her body from Blois to the Cathedral of St. Denis. A third wife proved fatal. Louis XII gave way to Francis I, whose chief contribution to the château was the wing with the Open Staircase which has been already described.

I must now pass rapidly on to the reign of Henry III and the famous sitting of the States General held at Blois in 1588. The scene is a very different one from that of 1501. The simple domestic happiness, the solid and royal respectability, the hospitable kindness of Louis XII have vanished. In their place is the subtle corruption of the last of the Valois, the intrigues of Catholic against Protestant, of the League against the Court, of Guise against the King. Instead



of Anne of Brittany and Mlle. de Foix, we have Catherine de' Medici, la Reine Margot, and all the decadent beauties of the Escadron Volant. It is not an atmosphere I like. But no one can call it dull.

The Estates were summoned to Blois in September, 1588, merely to temporise with inconvenient reformers and to delay reform. Henry III arrived at the château on the eleventh of the month, in that state of peevish defiance which weak natures mistake for courage. He proceeded to make as many changes in his Ministers and his surroundings as he could, under the impression that he was displaying his independence. The Chancellor, Cheverny, was dismissed, and left his château, for a home so near the King was dangerous. Montholon, who took the seals, was so ignorant of the Court that he did not even recognise the King. It soon became obvious that Henry's object was to surround himself with Ministers who would know no better than to carry out his wishes blindly. Guise laughed at the plan and welcomed it.



216.—COLUMN IN GALLERY OF LOUIS XII.



217.—COLUMN IN GALLERY OF LOUIS XII.

In October the three Estates chose their Presidents. The Cardinal de Guise was elected by the Church, the Comte de Brissac by the Nobility and Chapelle-Marteau for the Tiers-Etat. A staircase led down from the wing of Francis I to the Parliament Hall, where a dais had been built up for the King, who sat between Catherine de' Medici, his mother and his Queen, with Vendôme, Soissons, Montpensier, Nemours, Nevers and Retz close by him. Before him, facing the Deputies, sat Guise, in white satin, with a small, round, feathered cap.

Proceedings began with an excellent speech from the King, who thoroughly understood the art of saying much and meaning nothing. "Je suis vostre roy," for instance; "donné de Dieu, et suis seul qui le puis véritablement et légitimement dire, c'est pourquoy je ne veux estre en cette monarchie que ce que j'y suis. . . ." But even this was considerably better than the discourses which followed. Montholon recited the development and excellence of Assemblies General from the days of Solomon onwards. The Archbishop of Bourges,





218.—THE PARLIAMENT HALL.





219.—DOOR OF ROOM OF CATHERINE DE' MEDICI.

comparing the utterances of the King to Nestor's wisdom, went on to mention Moses and Hercules, touching lightly on Nebuchadnezzar and Artaxerxes, and swelling his peroration with the mighty syllables of Arganthonius. The King had arranged to put all the real sting of his speech in the printed version. But Guise was quite content with the honey, and Henry was forced to "correct the proofs" as his master wanted. At the next sitting the comedy was continued. Apparently giving in to Guise in everything, the King bided his time, and carefully affected a ceremonial formality for edicts and observances that were never meant to take their full effect. The Parliament proceeded to deliberate, and the Catholic League, emboldened by success, almost openly threw off the mask and virulently attacked the throne in one political pamphlet after another. Every concession Henry made was heralded as one more defeat, every delay he created was abused as an attempt to thwart "the wishes of the people." He was a scoundrel, but it is almost impossible to help being sorry for him; and it is very easy to realise the cruel revenge into which he was eventually goaded. In the end it became an actual struggle for existence. The ancient and sacrosanct Majesty of France had been irretrievably weakened. The man who once was King had to fight for his life. As soon as he realised this and made up his mind what he should do, his former weakness became a positive assistance to him. Nobody suspected what the end would be. The general derision was only heightened by the number of Capucin friars lodged by Henry in the top floors of the château. Whether their presence was a deliberate deception, with the object of still further encouraging the Party who talked of "tonsuring the King," or whether it was suggested by the unhealthy prompting of a coward's conscience, we shall never know. On December 18th Christine of Lorraine, sister of the Queen, was married by proxy to Ferdinand de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany, in the castle chapel; and, before the festivities were over, Henry gathered a few of his closest friends in the apartments of his mother Catherine: Aumont, Rambouillet, Louis d'Angennes and one or two more. They determined on assassination. The King gloated over the details with all the ferocity of a weak man who has at last found accomplices. Guise was strong



in the number of his adherents and in their devotion to his cause ; but his very overconfidence became his ruin. It was necessary to choose a time and place when that confidence would be at its height. Whenever the King sent for Guise to his own apartments, the Duke's suite poured in after him and filled the Council Chamber, which opened out of the Open Staircase, in the first floor on the left as you ascended. On special days, the Council Chamber's doors were guarded, and the Duke's suite waited on the landings of the staircase or walked along the passage just outside it that led to the "Perche aux Bretons" in the north-west corner of the courtyard, before Gaston of Orleans pulled it all down to make room for Mansard's buildings. A summons to the King's apartments at an early hour seemed the best opportunity. Crillon—"le brave Crillon"—refused to be a mere assassin. On December 21st Loignac, first gentleman of the bedchamber, agreed "to do all that was necessary." The Duke continued as haughty, as unbelieving, as before. He sent in his resignation as Lieutenant-General, in order to accept the post of Constable from Parliament. But the King put him off with the assurance that "in two or three days the position would be settled." The castle seemed full of portents of catastrophe. But Guise paid no more heed to them than to the couplets which rained into his rooms from every side, warnings, encouragements, threats. "No one would dare," was his invariable reply, when he replied at all. To his friends: "If I saw Death enter at the window, I would not open the door to run away." His acute political intuition kept him steady at his post. His undoubted courage, proved on many a field, minimised all fear of the consequences. His exaggerated self-assurance destroyed the last symptoms of precaution. His fate had come upon him, and he feared not to put it to the touch. The patience and the self-effacement of the King—which seriously alarmed the rest—seemed to him only the natural development of a cowardly and pietistic nature. At seven on the evening of the 22nd, Henry, who had given out that he was going a



220.—DOOR IN SOUTHERN WING.



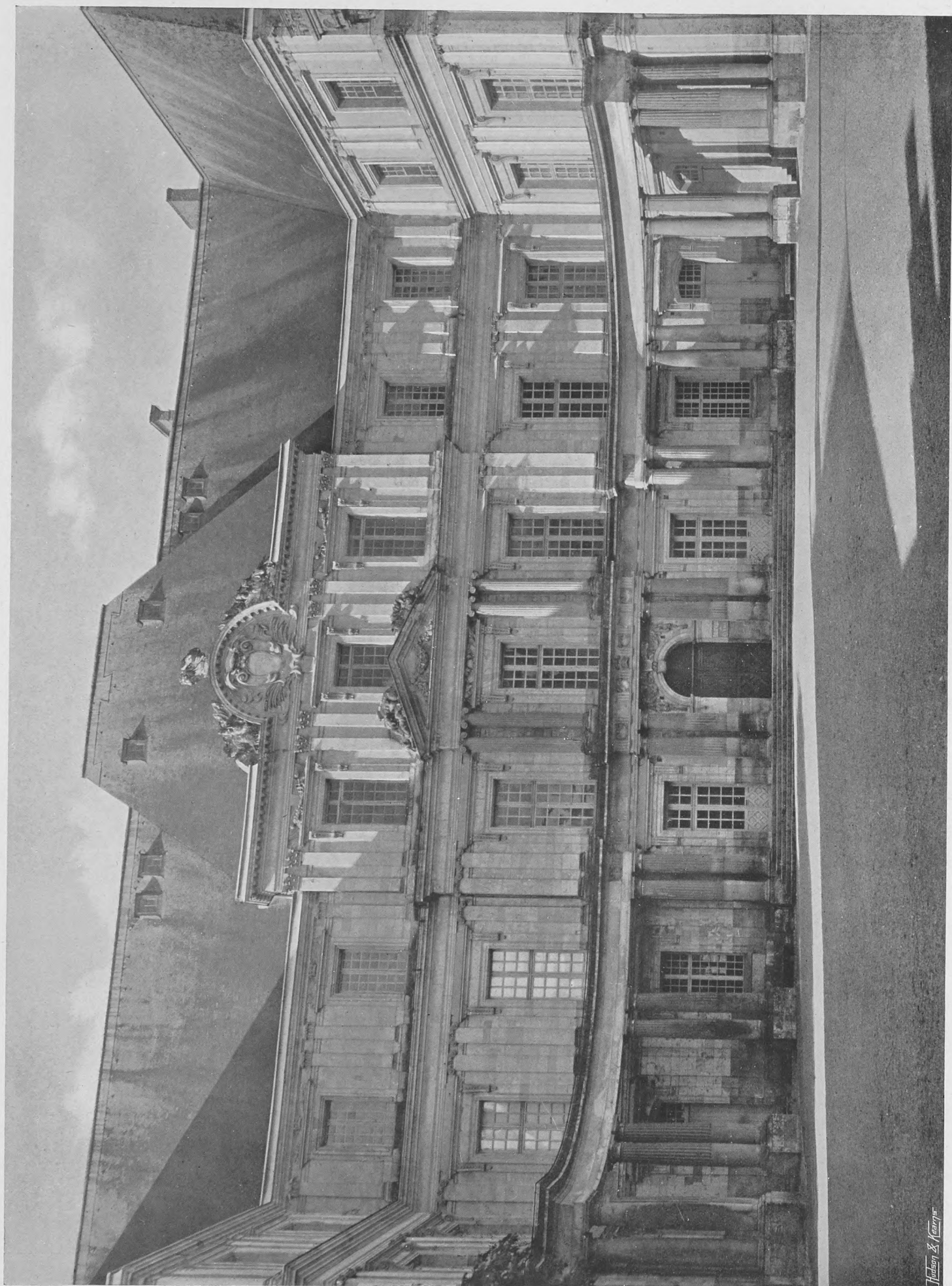


221-2-3.—THREE OVERMANTELS.

pilgrimage on the morrow, ordered a carriage to be ready early in the morning of the 23rd, and sent messages to Guise, to the Cardinal and other Councillors to present themselves early in the King's rooms that the necessary measures might be taken for the conduct of business in the King's absence; he went to bed at midnight, after leaving word that he was to be called at four. Guise passed the night with the Marquise de Noirmoutiers. At four on the morning of the 23rd, du Halde sent word to the King that Bellegarde and Loignac with nine of the "Quarante-Cinq" were waiting. These went up into the rooms set apart for the monks, and were then brought down (by the small secret staircase in the middle of the building) to the King's bedroom, where they were posted. Aumont was sent into the Council Chamber with orders to begin the business of the day and keep watch over the Cardinal. Two of the royal chaplains were placed in the King's oratory to pray "for the success of a matter touching the peace of his kingdom." Henry paced up and down from one room to another of his private apartments. The Cardinal had reached the Council Chamber, but the Duke was still absent; and a cold rain beat against the castle windows.

At last Guise crossed the courtyard. In the doorway of the Open Staircase Larchant and his men-at-arms met him with a petition for the arrears of their pay.





224.—FACADE OF GASTON D'ORLEANS.

J. H. & C. Co.



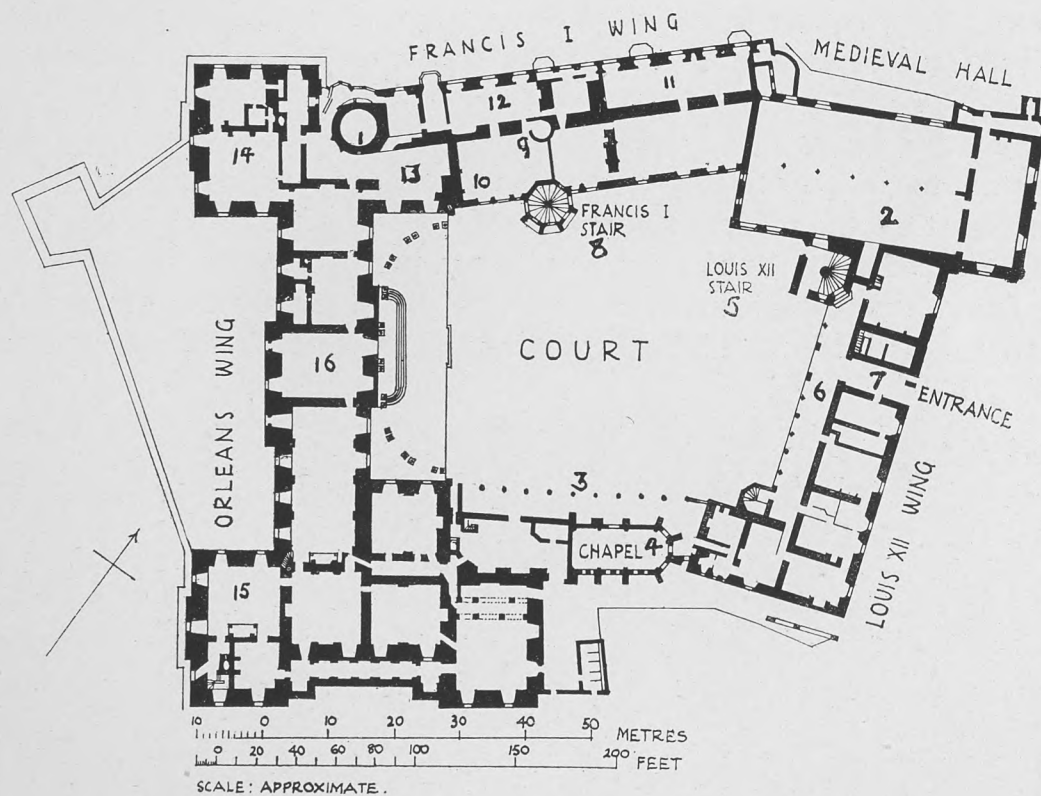


225.—THE GALLERY OF THE DUKES OF ORLEANS.



He promised what they wanted, and went up into the Council Chamber. Larchant's men closed in behind him, and twenty guards moved up beyond him into the Cabinet Vieux. In the Council Chamber he found his brother the Cardinal with Aumont, Retz and others. Feeling cold as he stood by the fire, he sent word to the King's chamberlain for a box of prunes, which was brought to him. The business of the council had just begun again, when Révol opened the door with a message that the Duke was wanted by His Majesty. Guise threw what was left of the prunes on to the table, saluted the councillors and went out. The door was shut behind him. Half noticing that he was followed, he turned slightly, with his right hand on his beard, when Montsery rushed forward, threw up his arm and thrust a dagger at his throat. The Duke had scarcely time to shout for help before Des Effrenats caught him by the leg, and Sainte-Malines stabbed him at the back of the head. He threw them off in the sheer strength of his last agony, and dragged himself to the King's bed with one choking cry for pity. He never spoke again. The King came in and ordered Beaulieu to search the body. In one pocket was a memorandum: "Civil War in France would cost 700,000 crowns a month." The Duke still breathed, but in another moment all was over. The Cardinal was seized and guarded in the Council Chamber. By the next morning both brothers were dead, and their ashes were cast into the Loire. Catherine, the Queen Mother, lay dying in the rooms beneath; but her only indignation was at realising that she had not been called in to advise or help. Within a year the King himself had been assassinated.

After the tragedy of the Open Staircase, the records of the wing of Gaston of Orleans on the west side of the courtyard are dull reading; and the episodes of the escape of Marie de' Medici add no dignity to either. Before the death of Louis XIV, Blois began to be neglected. In the reign of his successor, it was finally deserted by the Court.



225A.—PLAN OF CASTLE OF BLOIS.

*The Five Periods of Building at Blois.*

- |                         |                           |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| I.—Contes de Chatillon. | IV.—François I.           |
| 1. Tour du Donjon.      | 8. Open Staircase.        |
| 2. Salle des Etats.     | 9. Secret Stairway.       |
| II.—Ducs d'Orléans.     | 10. Council Chamber.      |
| 3. Galerie.             | 11. Cabinet neuf.         |
| III.—Louis XII.         | 12. Bedroom of Henri III. |
| 4. Chapelle St. Calais. | 13. Site of Cabinet vieux |
| 5. Grand Escalier.      | V.—Gaston d'Orléans.      |
| 6. Galerie.             | 14. Pavillon du Jardin    |
| 7. Entrance porch.      | 15. Pavillon de Foix.     |
|                         | 16. Dome.                 |

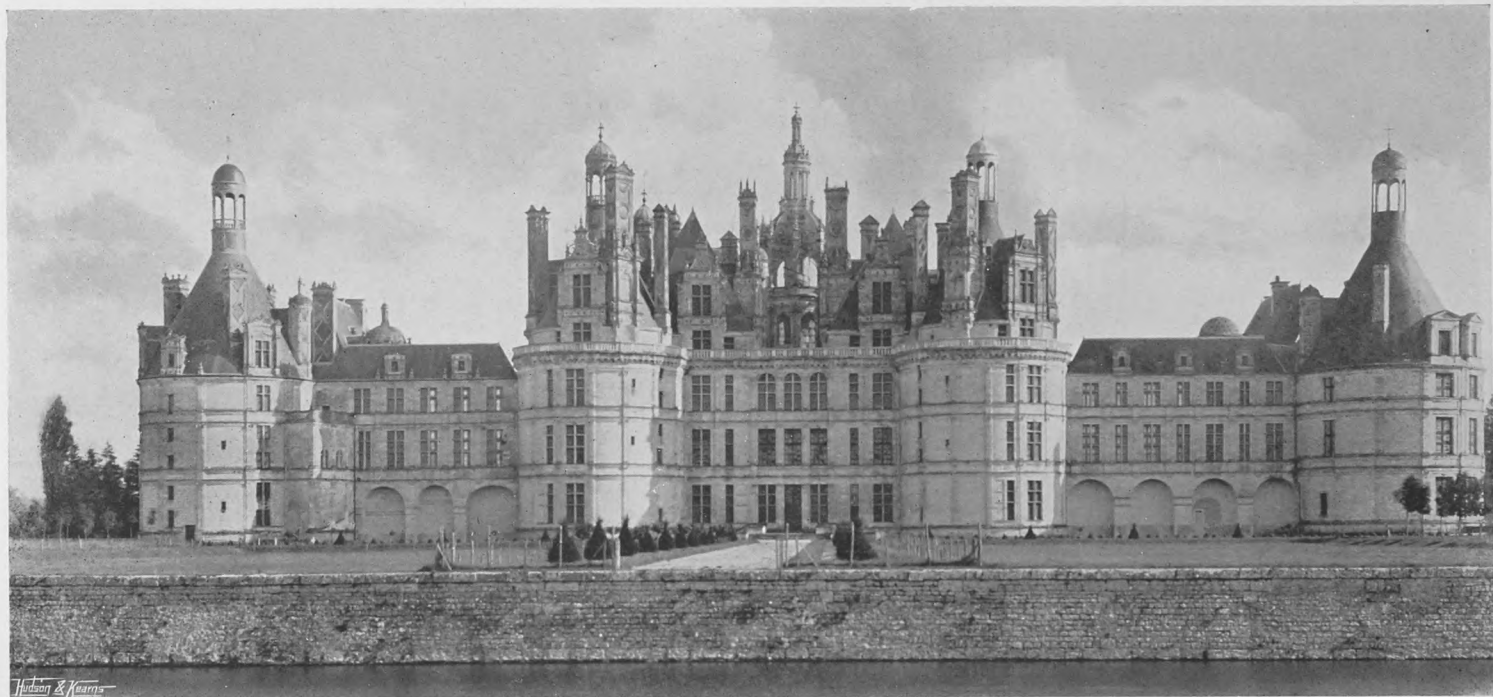


## CHAPTER XIV.

## CHAMBORD, LOIR-ET-CHER.\*

**C**HAMBORD is one of those gigantic buildings which claim several centuries for their construction, and are still incomplete when restoration has become inevitable. It is a fantastic dream rather than an orderly design, and you may more easily imagine it to be the home of Gargantua and Pantagruel than the residence of the most Royal exemplars of prosaic humanity. Its dominating characteristic, a riotous originality of exaggerated ornament, culminates in its roof, to which you are led by the most typical feature of its grotesque construction, the central stairway with its double interlacing spirals of fretted stonework. This roof, indeed, is the first thing you see at the end of the long melancholy avenue which conducts you through the Park of Chambord out of the main road from Blois. It gives you the impression of some monstrous village in the air, some weird construction out of the *Arabian Nights* wrought by wild genies for the Sultan of a day. By degrees its flaming pinnacles of stone show their foundation upon solid earth, and beneath them you perceive a huge barrack of masonry like a toad beneath a flower-bed. The ignoble vicissitudes of fate have spoilt even the dignity which the original mass may once have claimed; for now its bulk, truncated and top heavy, squats over-weighted on the turf instead of rising upon arches that heaved up their spacious curves from sparkling moats, or sprang from deep embankments crowned with balustrades.

Though the dusty silences of Chambord, which no Court will ever again inhabit, give an oppressive welcome to any imaginative traveller, you may still trace in this labyrinthine wilderness of carved stone the evidence of the haste with which its first builders set about their work in those first decades of the sixteenth century when the strong impulses of an older art were struggling feverishly against decay, and when the restrained taste of the Italians had not yet fully touched the architect. These beginnings alone cost Francis I over forty thousand



226.—SOUTH FACADE.

\* The Seat of the Duc de Parme and the Comte de Bardi.





227.—TWO CHIMNEYS FROM TERRACE.



pounds of our money. His immediate successors built nearly eighty thousand pounds into them. Their size may be imagined from the fact that you could contain the whole of Chaumont in that single square which forms the *corps de logis* set against one side of the vast parallelogram of Chambord.

The origin of the place, as we see it, was no doubt the King's desire to have a royal hunting-box in the plains of the Sologne. He transformed the feudal castle of the Counts of Blois into a dwelling-place that should be suitable for the complicated luxury of a lascivious Court. At Chambord the architect gaily gave full rein to an inventiveness that has rarely been equalled in fertility, and he most thoroughly enjoyed an opportunity which no architect has ever had before or since. There was no question of security or military strength. No State-regulated schools of style fettered his talents, no academic cliques restrained his rich exuberance, no parsimonious Treasury exclaimed at his expense. He used the main bulk of his building as the mere foundation for the medley of cupolas, minarets, chimney-stacks, lanterns, belvederes and spires which luxuriate upon its roof. Even the unity of his most massive walls he broke by a series of pinnacles and turrets which jut out at unexpected points, and refuse—as it were—to fulfil the promise which their surroundings have given to the eye. Within, his accidents



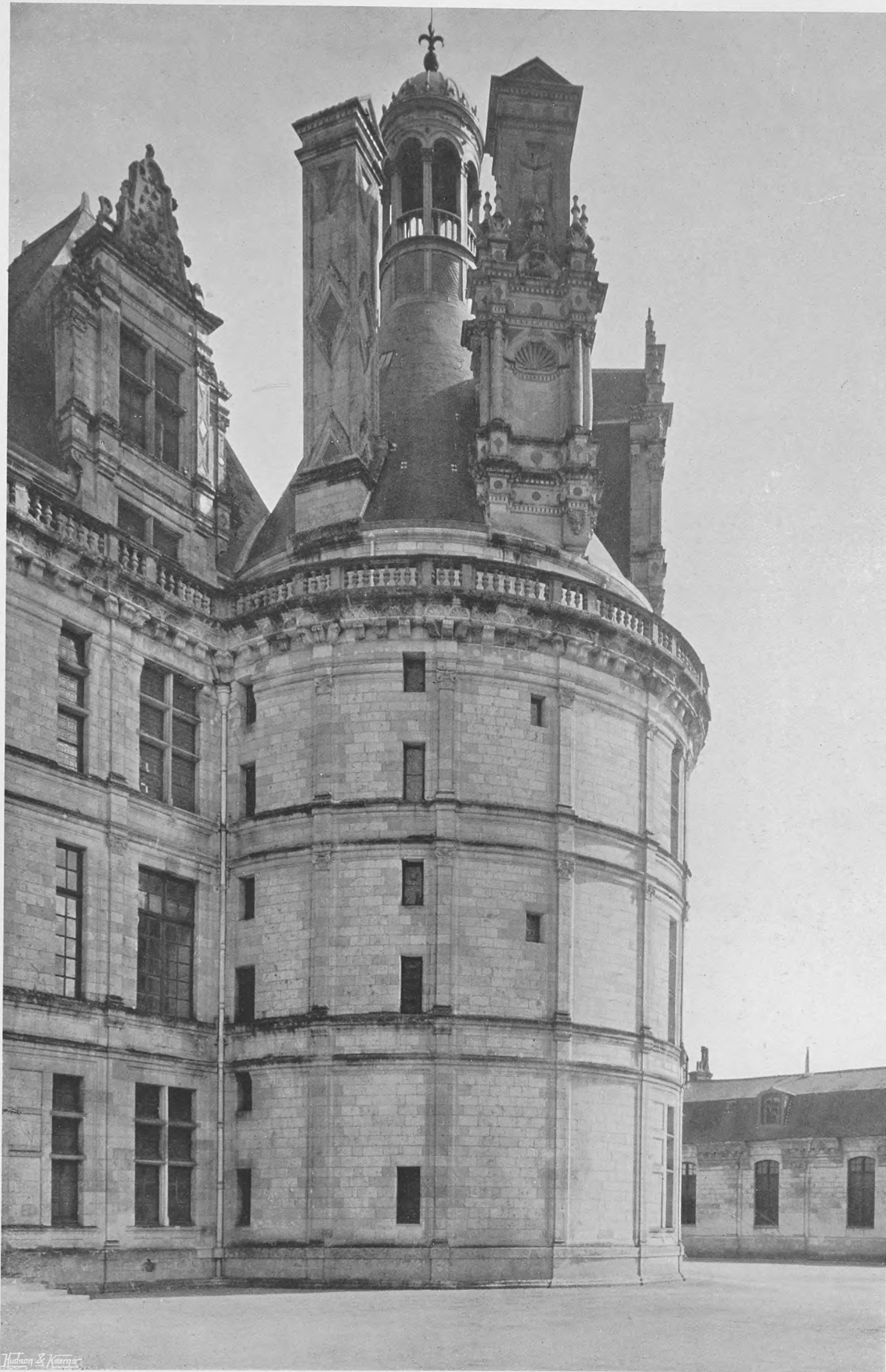
228.—MANSARD'S GALLERY.

and alarums are multiplied with an even more amazing complexity ; for here is something which is neither a Gothic castle nor an Italian palace, neither a home where life must be in common, nor a monastery where all shall be apart ; but a true abbey of Thelema, where halls of state, secluded cabinets, private apartments, hidden corridors and mystifying staircases are all brought together beneath one roof, and all treated with the triumphant caprice of a frolicsome creator who has emancipated himself from the old Gothic without giving his allegiance to the new Renaissance. Chambord is as French as it can be in the fine frenzy of its transition. I had almost written that it is typical of the "esprit Gaulois," beloved of its first builder, the amorous Francis ; but in the faint foliated traceries and arabesques in low relief which here and there rise or fall in subtle adaptation to the lines of structure you may divine the promise of a future that Chambord never knew. It missed the best of what was coming. It endured the worst that vandalism could inflict. But its lavish and vigorous audacity has survived to an astonishing degree, as the fitting framework for its multifarious memories—from the intrigues of Francis I to the *folie d'honneur* of "Henri V." Françoise de Foix, the lovely Countess of Chateaubriand, was the first mistress who inspired the Royal gaieties of Chambord. She was followed by Anne



de Pisseleu, Duchesse d'Etampes; and their quarrels give a very faithful foretaste of the bickerings between the Montespan and Mme. de Maintenon later on. Diane de Poitiers, as "La Grande Sénéchale," knew Chambord, too; but I can never imagine her businesslike beauty and healthy appetites in this preposterously irregular domain, where the sombre genius of the Emperor Charles V must have been equally ill at ease, for different reasons; and where Anne de Montmorency, the Constable, making ponderous love to Queen Eleanor, or Gaston of Orleans playing fatuous games with "La Grande Mademoiselle" on the double staircase, seem entirely in harmony with their surroundings.

It is almost impossible to think connectedly about either history or architecture in such a dwelling. But a word is necessary about this double staircase before I leave you to discover its intricacies for yourselves. I use the plural because no one could discover them alone. You must either be the gallant adventurer at the top waiting for two ladies, who rush simultaneously up to him, without ever coming into contact with each other, or you must be the jealous husband



228A.—NORTH-EAST CORNER OF THE COURTYARD.

who goes up to meet his erring consort, while she descends the whole way without ever meeting him. It is the most solid thing I know in practical jokes, and the skill with which the two spirals are arranged is almost too delicate to be thrown away on such a ponderous jest in masonry. You may easiest imagine it as two corkscrews, one within the other, so that,



though you may go up or down by whichever stair you please, you will never meet your comrade, who ascends or descends by the other. The lantern at the top of this double staircase is the chief attraction among the many wonders on the roof of Chambord. Beneath its enormous fleur-de-lys, Catherine de' Medici is said to have consulted the stars with her astrologer. But there are twelve other large staircases, and innumerable smaller ones, as may be imagined, when I add that there are no less than four hundred and forty rooms in this enormous labyrinth of a house, which was begun between 1519 and 1526 and is not finished yet!

The last visit of Francis I to Chambord took place in 1545, and it is pleasant to think of him with his sister Marguerite, the witty writer of the *Heptameron*, scratching on a window with his diamond ring the famous distich:

Souvent femme varie,  
Mal habil qui s'y fie,

a piece of advice he had been careful not to take to heart until the changeabilities of woman-kind offered no more attractions to a nature at once as inconstant and as volatile as ever graced a throne. His immediate descendants, deprived of those delectable associations which had so long attracted Francis, did not often favour Chambord. Of them all, the most sinister figure is that of Charles IX, who came here to hunt, and rode down a stag alone on horseback in the park. I would rather have met the ghostly form of that black hunter, Thibault le Tricheur, who was said for many years to have holloaed



229.—A CORNER STAIRCASE IN THE COURTYARD.

his phantom pack across the stormy sky from Montfauult to the coverts by the Cosson.

That very dull personage Louis XIII found a natural pleasure in visiting surroundings which were highly distasteful to his Valois predecessors; and the alarmingly complete diary of his proceedings left by his private doctor, in July, 1614, informs us of the exact menu of his lunch at Chambord. It consisted of strawberries in sugar and white wine, cherries, the breast of a boiled pigeon with three cock's combs on it, green peas cooked with chicken gravy, sweet-breads, stewed capon, a pigeon's wing roasted in bread-crumbs, the breast of a quail,





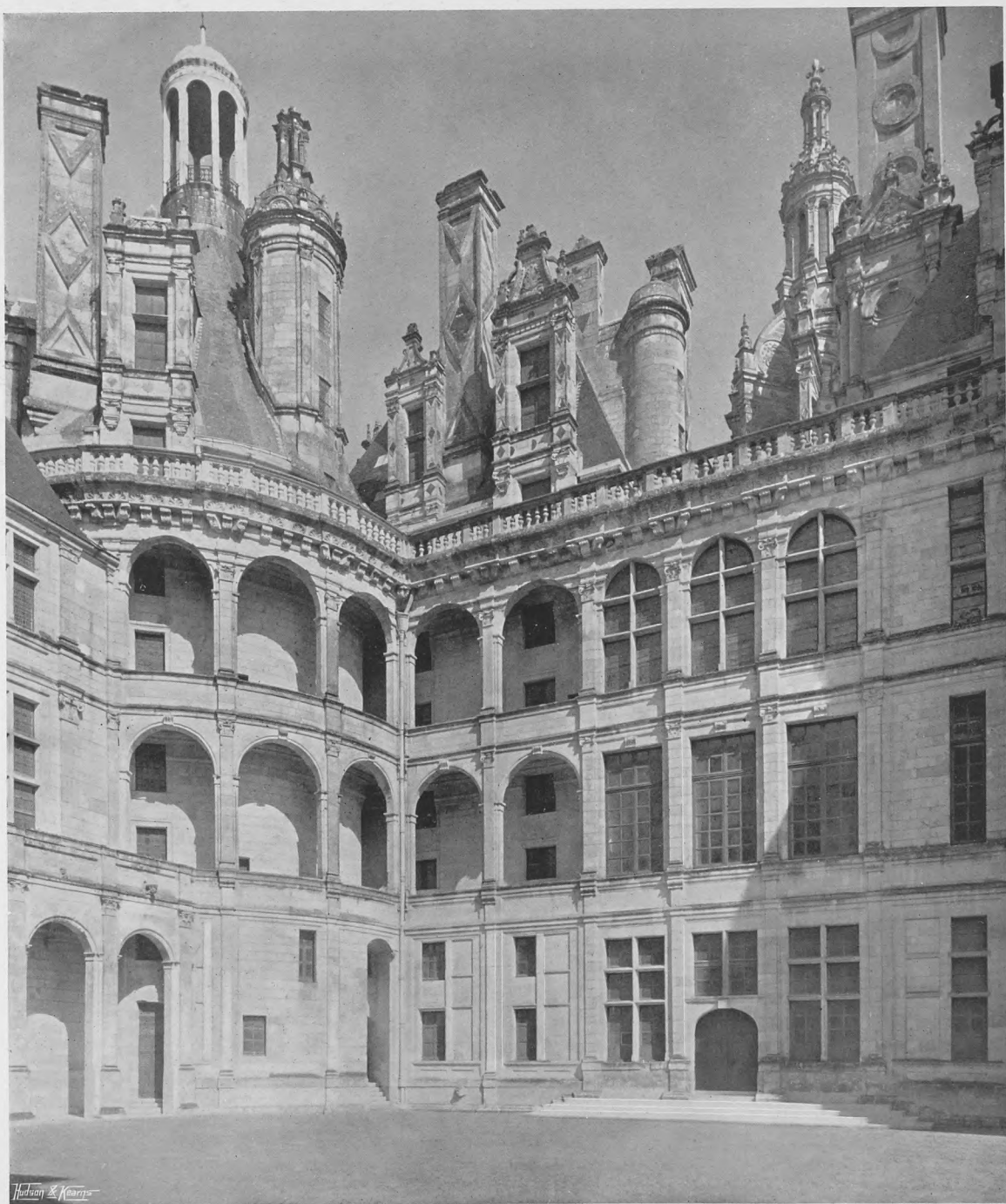
230.—A CHIMNEY FROM THE TERRACE.



blanc-mange and cake, candied cherries, sweetmeats, light claret and water. . . . Not so bad for a youth under thirteen. His diet had very little effect upon his character when he grew older, for it was at Chambord that he tried to take a letter out of the corsage of the beautiful Mme. de Hautefort with a pair of tongs. It is a trivial incident, but thoroughly typical of its chief actor. Scarcely more engaging is the figure of his brother, Gaston of Orleans, whose daughter, says our historian, was inspired by the amatory atmosphere of Chambord to give young Lauzun the incriminating billet-doux "C'est vous."

A little more life came into the place when the Royal sun of Louis XIV began to beam upon a properly appreciative nation; for he saw at Chambord the first representations of Molière's "Pourceaugnac" and "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme." In the first, Lulli took Molière's part owing to his chief's indisposition, and had to leap over the footlights into the bowels of an astonished orchestra before the King would give a single smile to lead his courtiers' applause. In the second, I find that the Chevalier d'Arvieux, whose intellectual accomplishments are indicated by his conduct of the French Embassy in the Levant, plumes himself on having "collaborated" with Molière in the immortal "Bourgeois," the fact being that he suggested a few Turkish costumes and turbans to give "local colour" to the scenery. The chief traces of Louis XIV are to be found in Mansard's additions to the château, which cost another seventy thousand pounds and quite ruined the effect of the original dispositions.

Stanilas Leczinski, the exiled King of Poland, completed the degradation of the buildings by filling up the moat, and it is not surprising to learn that he and his queen passed eight years here "in the practice of all the virtues." He went away in 1733, and in the next decade appeared the only real man who is intimately connected with Chambord's history: Marshal Saxe, the conqueror of the English infantry at Fontenoy. The only relic of him left is the marble table on which his body was embalmed. But it is worth more than all the furniture and fripperies which were destroyed or dissipated by the Revolution.



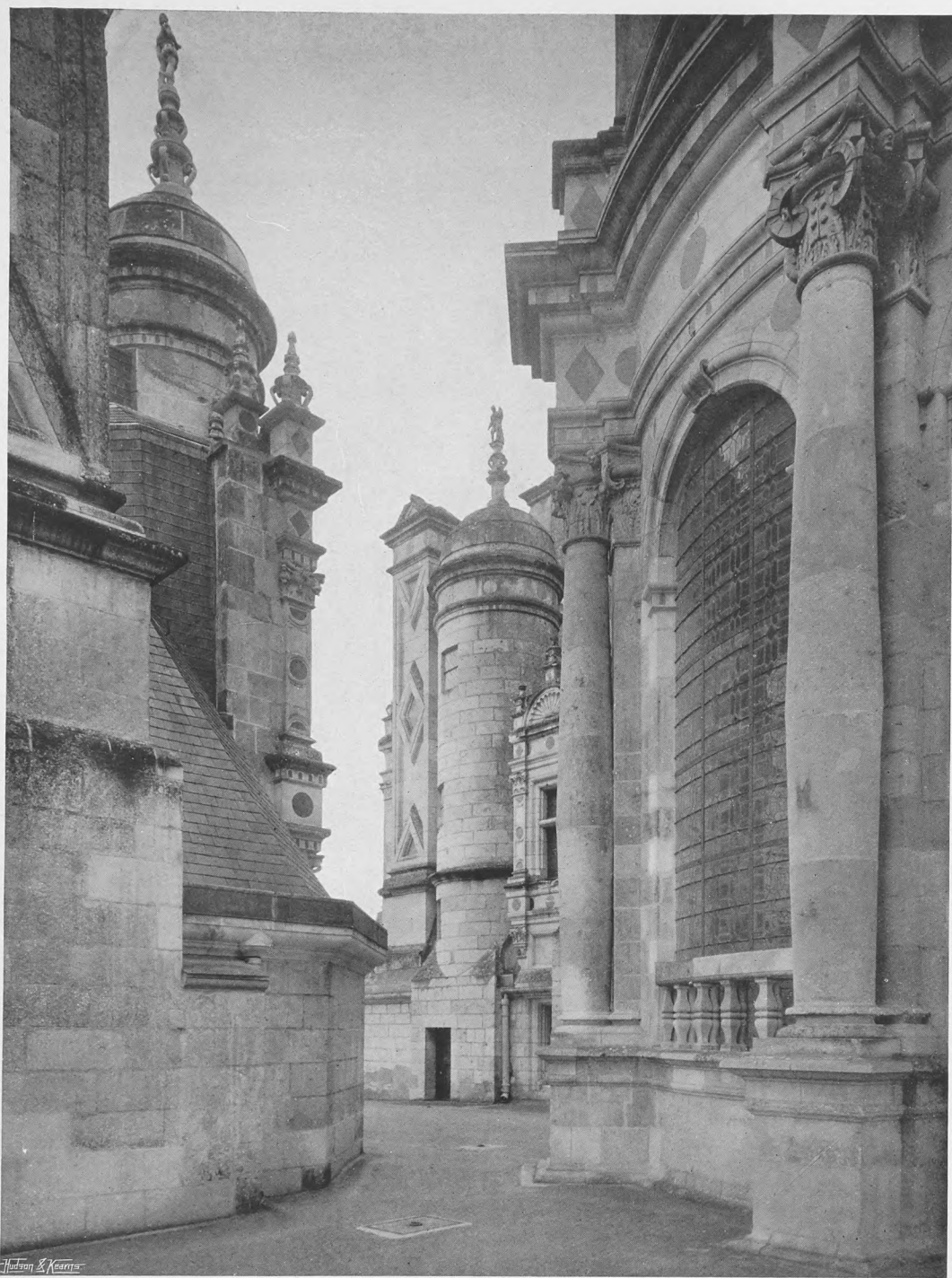
231.—NORTH-WEST CORNER OF COURTYARD.



Maurice de Saxe was born on October 28th, 1696, the natural son of Augustus II, Elector of Saxony (afterwards King of Poland), and the beautiful Aurora Königsmark. His birth gave him a double incentive to ambition. Dreams of that throne from which he was inevitably divided tinged all his passionate and active life. He was ever striving to show that he was worthy of the kingdoms of which the bar sinister alone deprived him. Marshal von der Schulenberg educated him so well that at twelve he was already in the Imperial army, and in a few years his headstrong courage had attracted the attention of Prince Eugene. His first marriage ended in divorce, and at twenty-five he was rioting through Paris with the Regent, but never lost an opportunity of studying both the theory and practice of that military science which he loved

so well. This period ended with the tragedy of Adrienne Lecouvreur, a great actress and a woman whose sterling qualities worthily enchained the volatile young soldier's firm fidelity. He left her only for the promise of a throne to which the proceeds of her jewels were to help him. His mother, now Abbess of Quedlinberg, sent further help. Twice he might have married the heiress of all the Russias. But he preferred the throne of Kurland, and held it until Russia and Poland between them crushed him out of it.

The dissipations in Paris into which he plunged to soothe his disappointment produced an illness in 1732 that gave the world those celebrated *Reveries* which were published after his death. If he had done nothing else, this book would have assured him a place in military history. He advocated universal military service, suggested many improvements in uniform, and introduced the tremendous reform of marching troops in unison to a cadenced step, a reform which did more for modern armies than any other single change. He urged the usefulness of a breech-loading carbine for cavalry, and recommended bayonet charges after a volley at close quarters. He preferred redoubts to entrenchments, and showed the virtue of his teaching on the bloody fields of Fontenoy, Rocoux and Laffeldt; but even before these he made his mark by the desperate charge he led at Ettingen in 1734, and by the capture of Prague in 1741, two campaigns in which he fully recognised the value of the lessons he had learnt from



232.—ROOF DETAILS FROM THE TERRACE.



his old master, the Duc de Noailles, and from such brilliant friends as Ulric Waldemar, the Count of Löwendahl, a man whose mind and body both were built upon the same heroic mould as those of Marshal Saxe.

At Josselin, my readers may remember, we met a captain who almost invaded England.



233.—CHAMBORD: TURRETS ON THE ROOF.

land, was in the Netherlands with a brilliant staff, among whom were Lord Ancrum, Henry Conway, Lord Bury and Lord Cathcart as his aides-de-camp; Lord Crawford with the Household Cavalry; Sir John Ligonier with the infantry; Lord Albemarle, colonel of the Coldstreams, with the Guards. These, with the Hanoverians and a strong coalition

At Chambord there lived another. In 1744 Saxe was given supreme command of an expedition which was to land Charles Edward on the British coasts. But Admiral Roquefeuille retired on Brest before the advancing Channel Fleet, and providential tempests swept the English seas of the Pretender and his foreign friends. A lasting injury was done to the Stuart cause by that alliance with the French. English resentment was deepened, if that were possible, by the disastrous campaign of General Wade round Lille and Courtrai, where Saxe completely outmanœuvred him; and those of our soldiers who came back were exhausted by countless marches to and fro that never brought them to fair grips with their enemy.

In April, 1745, William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland,

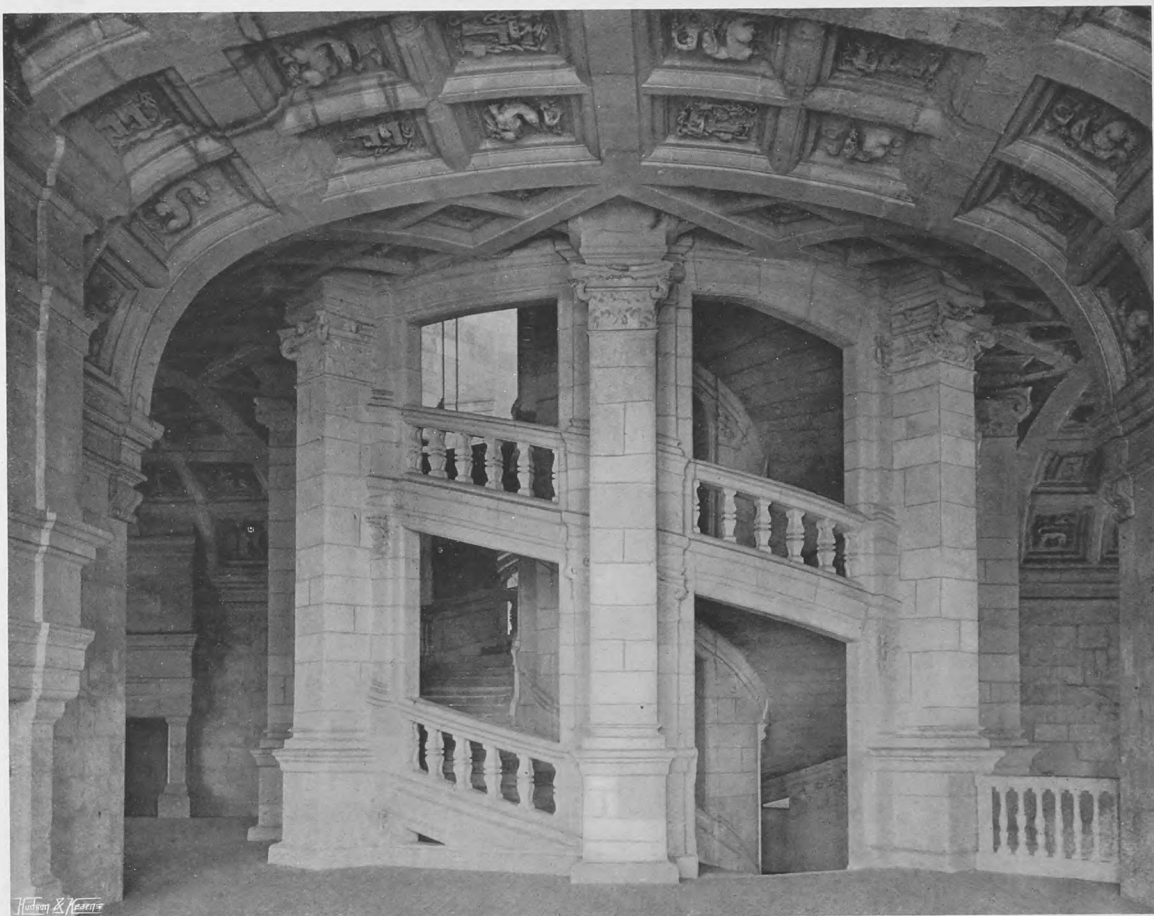




234.—THE DOUBLE STAIRCASE.



of our Allies, were faced in Flanders by the French troops under Maurice de Saxe as commander-in-chief, with the old Duc de Noailles serving under him. At first Saxe could get no further than Maubeuge, so heavy was the dropsy on him, and on the very morning of the crisis of the conflict he could only take up a position on the battlefield after the Grenadiers had dragged him to his favourite redoubt in a wicker chair. But his indomitable spirit and his clear grasp of all he had to do triumphed over every physical weakness. He chose his own fighting ground on a triangle, with Fontenoy at its apex and a base stretching from Antoin to the angle of Barri Wood. The redoubt D'Eu he built to defend Fontenoy, but the gap between them was left unfortified. In it he placed his best troops. In Barri Wood was the Irish Brigade under Clare, Dillon, Berwick, Bulkeley and the rest, to whom their compatriots have recently raised a memorial cross, on the spot. Louis XV himself was on the field, little doubting that he should retrieve the ill fortune of Poitiers, the last set fight in which a French king had faced the English. This is no place for me to tell in detail the slaughter, the courage, the endurance that were seen at Fontenoy; the charge of the Black Watch on the



235.—STAIRCASE: FIRST LANDING.

entrenchments; the advance of sixteen thousand men, under the Duke himself, dragging their own six-pounders with them, up the shot-swept slope of the redoubt; the grim courtesies of Lord Charles Hay on one side and of the Duc de Biron and Count d'Aute-roche on the other, when the flower of both armies at last stood facing one another; the square of British infantry which stood fast with the Duke in their midst against repeated cavalry charges, as

their descendants did at Waterloo, until their ranks were ploughed through and through with grape-shot at close range, and until our victory, in which the British cavalry had never had a chance of taking their fair share, was turned into defeat by the overwhelming movement in which Saxe hurled every man in the French army who could stand upright against our shattered lines. For twelve hours our men had had neither food nor rest. Even in retreat they remained redoubtable, facing about at every hundred paces and keeping off pursuit. Ligonier saved eleven thousand of them. In the Guards' Brigade not a single unwounded survivor was missing at the morrow's roll-call. In all, the Allies lost seven thousand five hundred and forty-five officers and men, of whom one thousand two hundred and thirty-seven killed and two thousand four hundred and twenty-five wounded were of the British regiments. Even Voltaire's estimate of the French losses amounts to seven thousand one hundred and thirty-seven. At least we made Saxe pay dearly for his victory.

In the autumn of that same year British influence on the Continent was again paralysed by the Revolt of '45, to which Cumberland had to hurry back. He stamped it out with ruthless

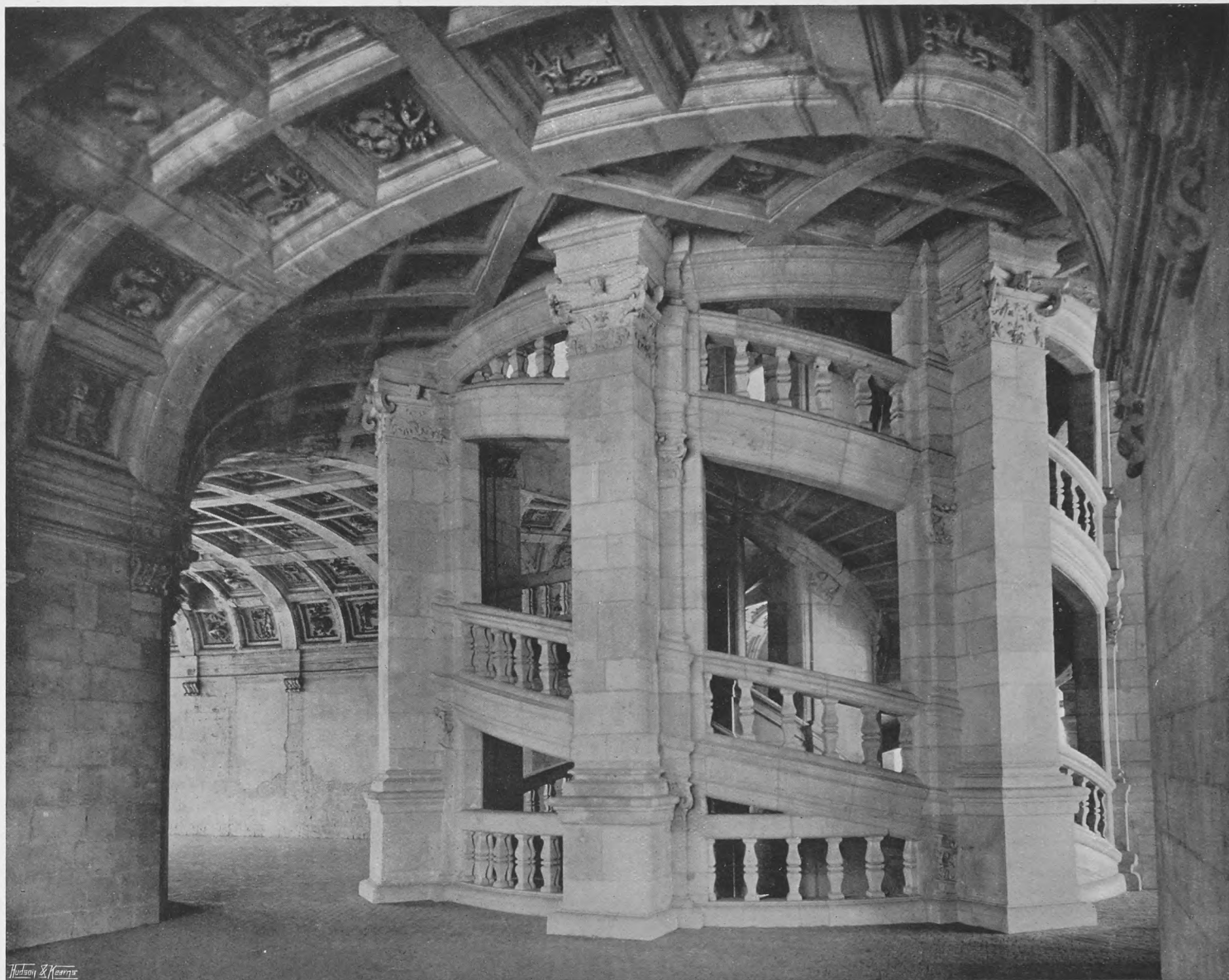




236.—LANTERN OF DOUBLE STAIRCASE ON THE ROOF.



slaughter. But Culloden was no revenge for Fontenoy. We had to wait till 1815 for that. Saxe's winter campaign in 1745-46 astonished Europe. At Christmas he was in Ghent, where Favart and his troupe gave nightly performances at the Opéra Comique, and fighting-cocks from England gave a change of excitement to the sporting officers of the general staff. By the end of January, however, Brussels had surrendered. With Volvarden the whole Dutch artillery and the Allies' magazines fell into the hands of France. Saxe's return was one long and brilliant ovation. In the Paris Opera (March, 1746), Mlle. Metz, personifying Glory in Lulli's *Armide*, handed to the hero her laurel crown amid the shouting of the crowded house. The King signified his approbation by the gift of Chambord, which was graced with six cannon captured from the enemy after the campaign of August, 1746, in which the headstrong Prince

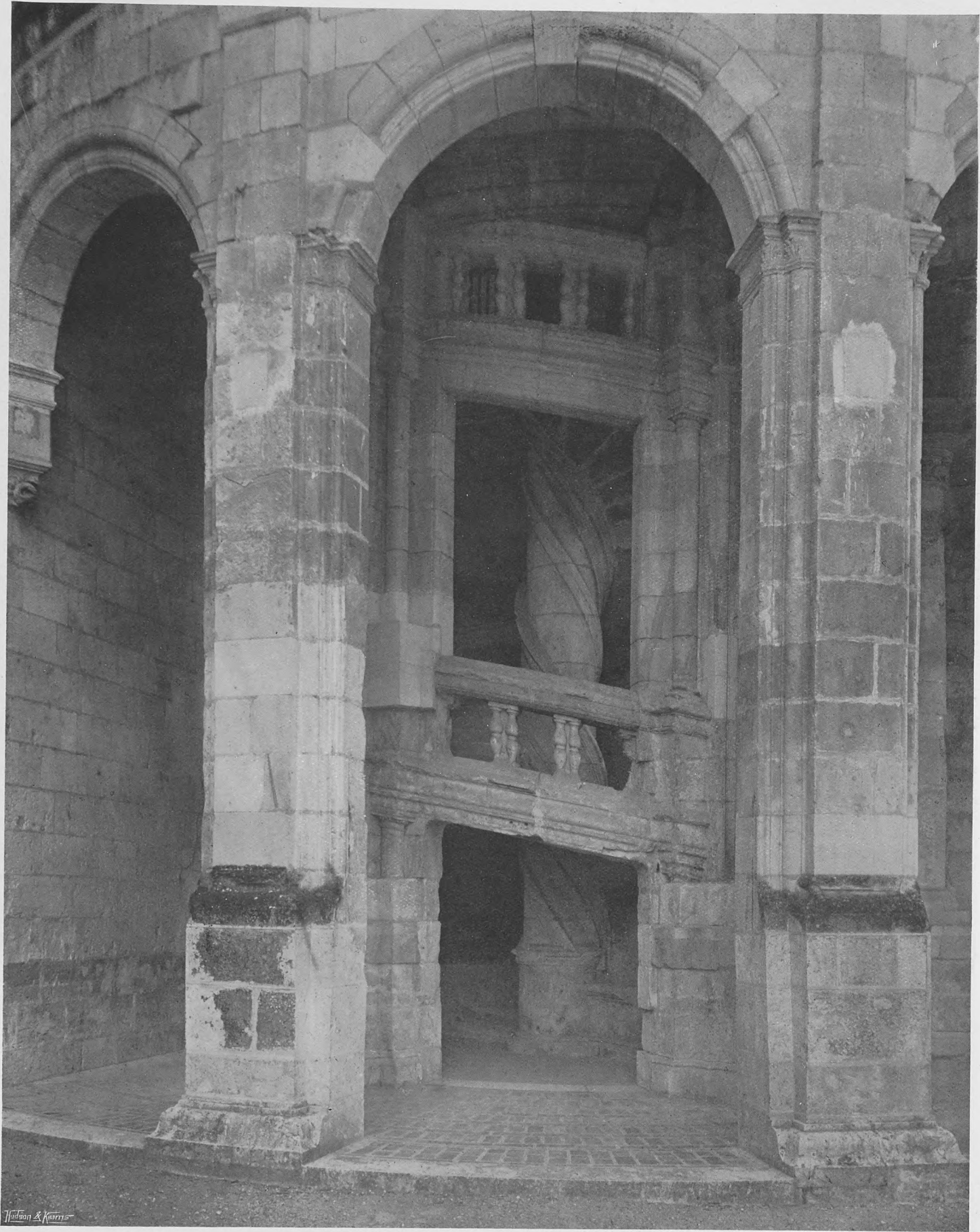


237.—STAIRCASE : UPPER LANDING.

of Conti, presuming on his position as a Prince of the Blood, had hotly opposed Saxe's greater experience at a Council of War.

In 1747 Cumberland was again in Flanders, striving to weld into some semblance of unity an unwieldy body of Dutch, British, Hanoverians and Austrians. Again Saxe was appointed generalissimo against him, in the South of Holland, while Löwendahl attacked Sluys and Fort Phillippine which defended Ghent. Again Saxe played the waiting game that had served him so well before. In July he anticipated the movement of the Allies by seizing the heights between them and Maastricht with one hundred and twenty thousand men. At Laffeldt the opposing armies met at ten o'clock. By midday Saxe had taken the key of our position and routed the Dutch cavalry. Ligonier made desperate efforts to retrieve the day by a splendid charge at the head of the Royal North British, Rich's, Rothes's and the Queen's Dragoons, which covered our infantry's retreat. Both Cumberland and Saxe were within an ace of being themselves





238.—SHAFT OF THE DOUBLE STAIRCASE.



taken prisoners. Each left the field with a chivalrous respect for his opponent. "Sire," said Saxe, when he brought Ligonier before Louis XV, "I present to your Majesty a man who has defeated all my plans by a single glorious action." The message the brave Ligonier brought back to Cumberland paved the way for the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in October, 1748.

These things will make every Englishman look with deeper interest at the marble table which is Chambord's noblest relic. Saxe was almost broken-hearted when he returned there,

but he proceeded to enjoy the last of his life in his own manner. His theatre, built round the double staircase, cost enormous sums, and I fear his dealings with pretty Mme. Favart, its best actress, are not wholly to his credit. More characteristic are the barracks which he built for one thousand two hundred cavalry, his stud for breeding horses, his menagerie, his hunting stables and kennels. Chambord became a gay garrison town, with a stirring combination of military display, sporting activities and occasional dramatic episodes. His regiment retained the name of "Volontaires de Saxe," which had been given them when they were raised in 1743. They wore green uniforms, with



239.—STONE FLEUR-DE-LYS REMOVED FROM ROOF.

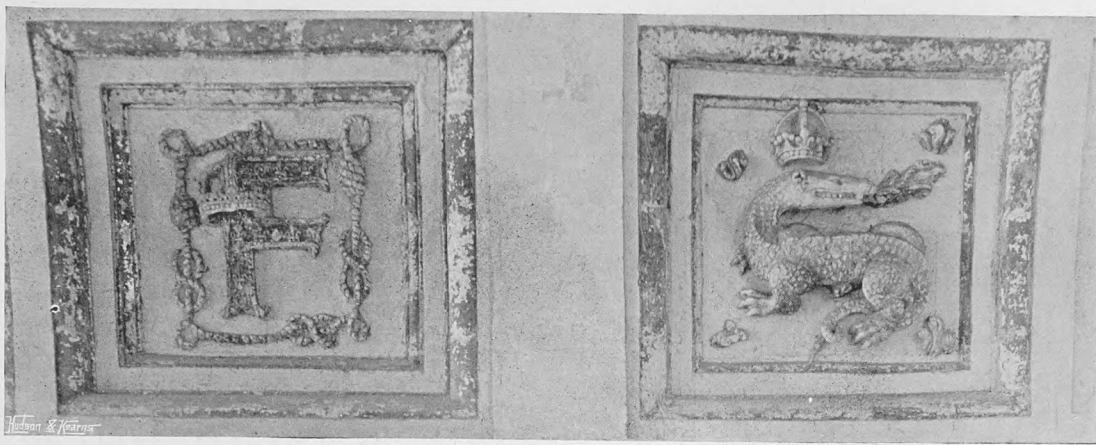
helmets of gilt brass, enriched with a Russian leather turban and surmounted by a horsehair tuft. The Uhlans carried sabre, lance and pistols, the dragoons had a rifled carbine and sword, and one troop was composed of negroes on white horses. All that was best in French society visited Chambord for a time, fascinated by its host's charming mixture of "Persian apparatus" and downright simplicity.

Maurice de Saxe never stopped dreaming till he died. As soon as the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle was signed, he asked to be made King of Madagascar. Finding that impracticable,



he thought of making Tobago, in the Antilles, the nucleus of a Western Empire. He dreamt of sovereignty in Corsica—he dreamt of heading a crusade of Israelites to America. In the intervals of these attractive visions, he always found time for fresh adventure nearer home. His love affairs with Mlle. Verrières resulted in a daughter, named Marie Aurore, who became the mother of George Sand. Quite suddenly, in November, 1750, France learnt that the great general was no more. There was no duel with the Prince of Conti, as has been suggested by romantic memoir writers. He caught a violent chill, and his constitution had been too much undermined to resist a severe congestion of the lungs. "Life," he said, as he lay dying, "is all a dream. Mine is short; but it has been a good one." And so the blue eyes closed upon the world he knew; the swarthy features fell into an unaccustomed stillness; the huge bulk of body moved no more. He had lived hard; but he had striven worthily. And whatsoever his hand had found to do, he did it with all his might. He is a refreshing figure in the mirage of Chambord's memories.

The Marquis de Polignac was the place's nextowner, and his family was turned



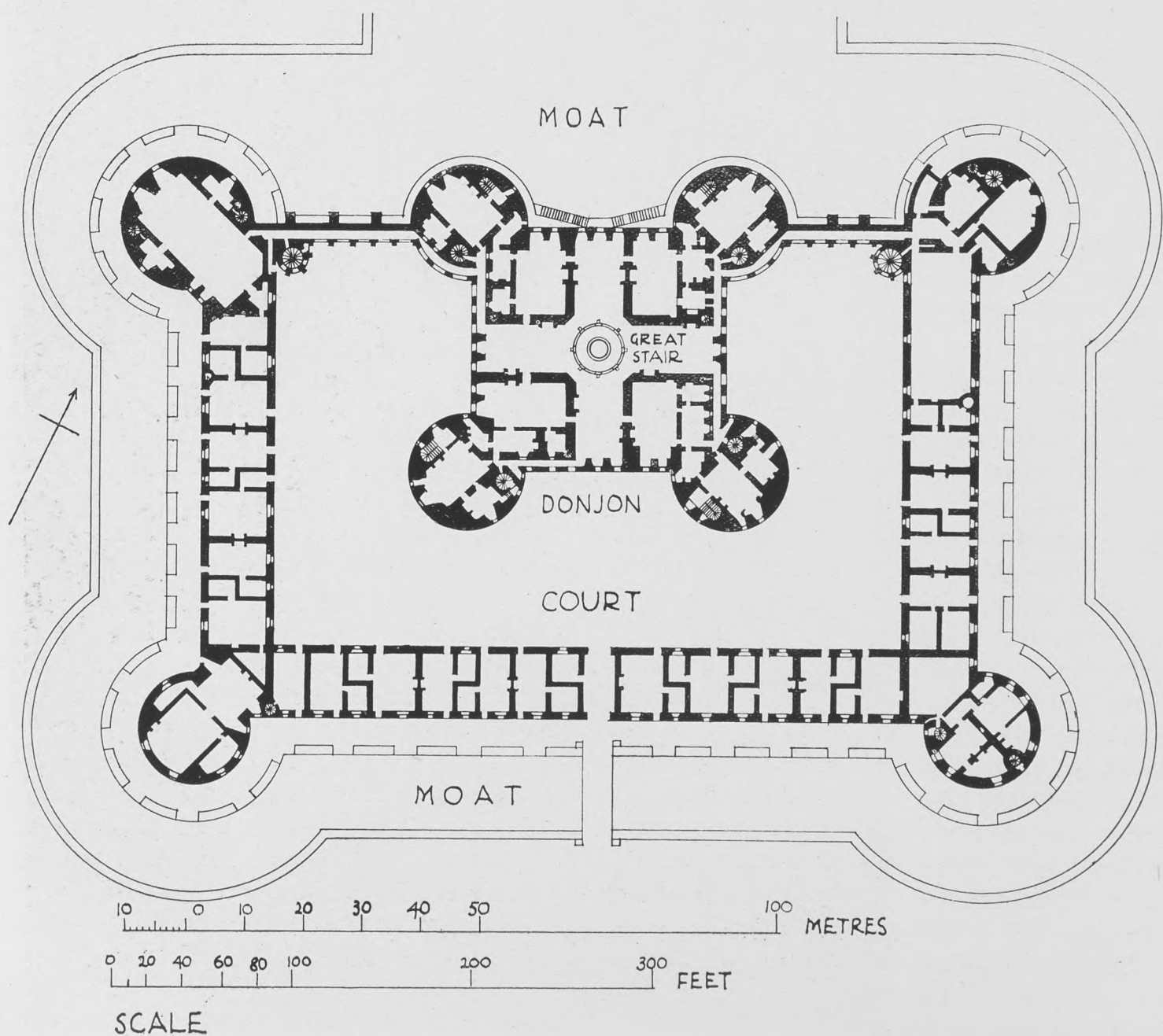
240.—CHAMBORD : DEVICES OF FRANCIS I.



241.—CHAMBORD : ENTRANCE TO ORATORY OF FRANCIS I.



out by the Revolution, which attempted to pull down every fleur-de-lys upon the building. Nothing short of an earthquake could have done that. Bonaparte saved Chambord from further desecration by giving it temporarily to the cohort of the Legion of Honour, commanded by Augereau. Then he gave it to Berthier, with the title of Prince of Wagram. In 1820 the estate was in the market. Count Adrian de Calonne raised a public subscription of sixty thousand pounds and gave it "au nom de la France à S. A. R. Monseigneur le duc de Bordeaux," grandson of Charles X, in spite of the perfervid protestations of Paul Louis Courier. The Duke at once took the title of Comte de Chambord, and it was here that in 1870 he wrote his famous letter about the white flag of the Bourbons. By him and by his heirs, the Duke of Parma and the Count of Bardi, the revenues of the estate have invariably been applied to the restoration of the château. In 1907 they were still completing the enormous mass of masonry begun in 1520. In 1913 MM. Marcel-Reymond and Charles Marcel-Reymond published their theory that Chambord was designed by Leonardo da Vinci, basing their arguments chiefly on the similarity between its plan (here reproduced) and that by Leonardo's friend and master, Bramante, for St. Peter's at Rome. But it was only four months after Leonardo's death, in 1519, that Francis I even gave orders for Chambord to be begun; and the wooden model of Chambord, made at Blois by Domenico Barnati di Cortona (and probably the one described in Félibien's "Memoires"), is the only trace of a design which is thoroughly French in spirit, though it is full of Italian ornament and detail, as was usual at the period. To-day, the absence of a moat and the presence of Mansard's additions entirely prevent any true conception of its first builder's original idea.



241A.—PLAN OF CHAMBORD.



CHAPTER XV.

AZAY-LE-RIDEAU.\*

THE plans for Azay-le-Rideau were made in 1513, and we know that the house was finished before 1524. It was built by Gilles Berthelot, one of those Surintendants de Finances who, after the King himself, inspired most of the best architecture in France and left the blackest tragedies in French history behind them. The names of Jacques Cœur, of Jacques de Beaune Semblançay, of Bohier, of Fouquet are remembered as much by their meteoric fall from power as by the heritage of beauty they left their countrymen. Gilles Berthelot suffered the same catastrophe and left behind him the same splendour, with a difference. For he is not a commanding personage among his contemporaries in history, and his house has a reasonable beauty and proportion of design which sets it apart from every other of its time in Touraine. So it was not only fortunate for the Government of France to have been able to purchase the place for two hundred thousand francs, but even more fortunate for the world that Azay-le-Rideau will be preserved for ever as a home for the treasures of that French Renaissance of which it is so early and so complete a gem.

The fact that it was sold by the Marquis de Biencourt (who inherited it) to M. Arnaud, who handed it on to the State; or that it passed from the Berthelots through many owners; or that it was once the home of Hugues Rideau, Seigneur d'Azay, who fought beside Philip Augustus at Bouvines—all these things need for the moment concern us even less than that the old feudal castle furnished a background to one of the most amusing of the Contes Drolatiques. What interests



242.—THE WAY IN.

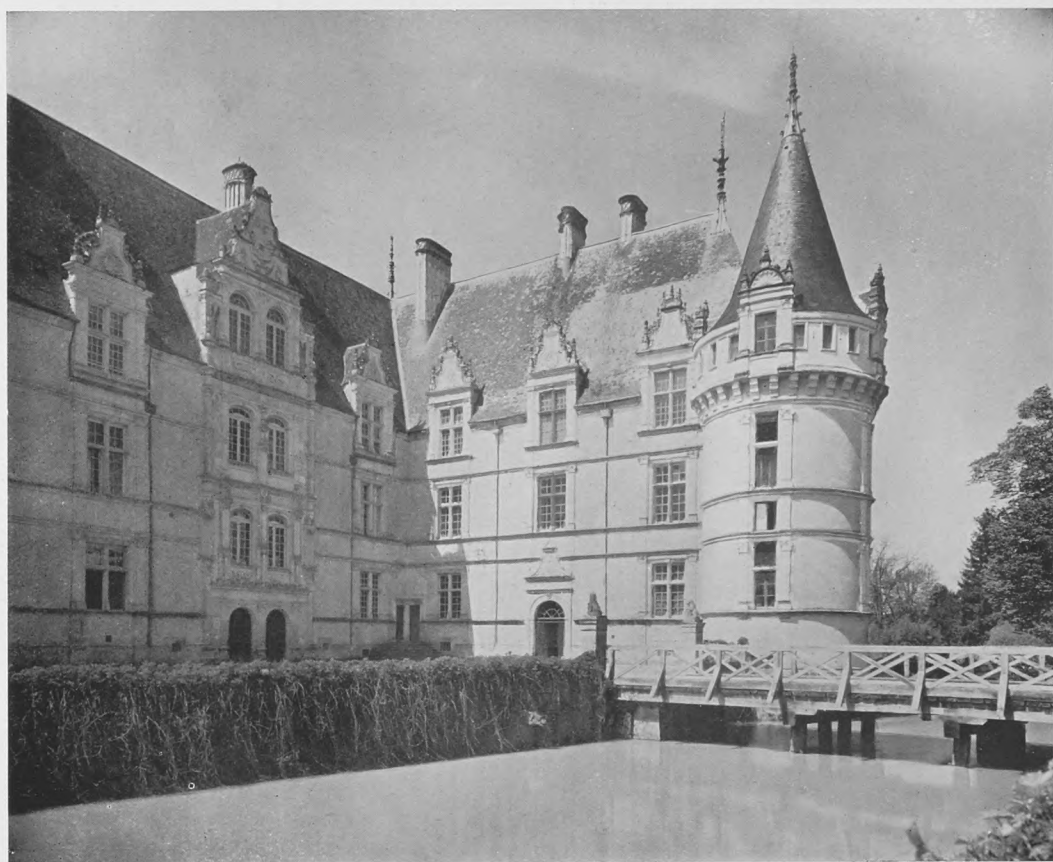
\*The Property of the French Nation.



me most is the difference between Azay-le-Rideau and any of those other stately habitations which were often mere adaptations of the feudal fortress they replaced, and sometimes even used the old foundations, with somewhat haphazard results as concerned the final plan.

There have been many books written about French architecture and many varying opinions held about particular examples of it, but I venture to think that no account, by any author of any nationality, has either produced so reasonable a theory of development, or placed so many valuable records of research in their right light, as Mr. Reginald Blomfield's *History of French Architecture*, published in 1911. That distinguished author, now a Royal Academician, pursues his subject from the reign of Charles VIII until the death of Mazarin; and my only quarrel with him—for it would be too dull entirely to agree—is that he has so frank and deep a personal preference for the ordered majesty of this period's closing years that he seems—in my opinion—too ready to neglect its earlier specimens and to classify them broadly as the ignorant make-shifts of some palæolithic era before the solemn epoch of the full-fledged architect. I agree that the architect as we know him to-day is indispensable. I agree that he did not exist in

France, in the same meaning, before, say, 1548. But I refuse to limit either the charms of proportion or the beauties of design to any dates so arbitrarily fixed. Nor have I ever been able to admit that the greatness of the "neo-classic" architecture of France was wholly due to Italy, even in what Mr. Blomfield would think the finest period of that architecture; and still less can I admit that debt in any of the chateaux designed in the first forty years of the sixteenth century. I secretly compare Mr. Blomfield's attitude to that of Voltaire, whose



243.—COURTYARD AND BRIDGE.

views of previous reigns may be briefly described as wholesale condemnation of the uninstructed chaos which had not produced a Roi-Soleil.

No evidence has come to light to disprove the argument that building, before 1540, still followed in the main what Mr. Blomfield, with unconscious disdain, calls "the mediæval method," the method, I would suggest, which produced the great cathedrals and that ecclesiastical art which, as M. Emile Mâle's wonderful book has just so beautifully proved, was far more careful about the detail of its carvings than has generally been supposed hitherto. In the great private houses and civic buildings, of the time we are examining, much the same practice was followed; and, as Mr. Blomfield very rightly points out, the question of the royal palaces is very much more complicated by the fact that the King was constantly interfering with suggestions of his own which were not the less "amateurish" (in its bad sense) because they emanated from the throne. I do not insist upon the "amateur." But I refuse to admit that good work is limited to the "professional." In such a time as 1500—1550 I look for the man who knows his job; who is not fettered by too much formality; who loves the gradual development of details or arrangements he has known of old into the growing necessities of a newer age; who is not afraid to show that the real origin (sometimes the actual foundation) of his pleasure palace was a feudal



fortress, or that his line of little windows underneath the sheer height of the roof were once machicolated battlements ; who does not mind handing over unimportant details of mural decoration to wandering Italian craftsmen ; but who plans and cuts and lays out his masonry himself. This is the striving of a capable man towards the perfection possible to his



244.—MAIN FRONT ACROSS THE RIVER.

surroundings ; and it interests me far more than that level attainment of a cold ideal which only marks the highest point before inevitable decline.

It will be well to have in our minds a short list of some of the Renaissance châteaux in this particular period. I will take them in the order of their building : Gaillon, Chaumont, Chenonceaux, Azay, Blois, Chambord, La Rochefoucauld, Chateaubriant, Ecouen, Ancy-le-Franc, Villandry. The first was begun in 1501, the last in 1540. Azay-le-Rideau, as I have



said, represents the years from 1513 to 1524. Chaumont had been finished. Chenonceaux was still in progress. The north wing of Blois was slowly rising. Chambord had scarcely been begun. And, if we may take Chambord as the worst example of the fatal exaggerations of an untrained fancy, I suggest that we may take Azay as an exquisite specimen of the ordered skill of "the mere mason." It is to my mind significant that Philibert de l'Orme and Jean Bullant, great as they were in many ways, had to work when Serlio had brought the "professional architect" finally into France, just as Léon Battista Alberti did in Italy, just as Inigo Jones did in England. These men, great as they were, do not seem to me so much to mark a period of culminating achievement as to indicate a point from which progress was stayed, when the rigidities of dissolution made their pallid appearance, when decay was the next step.

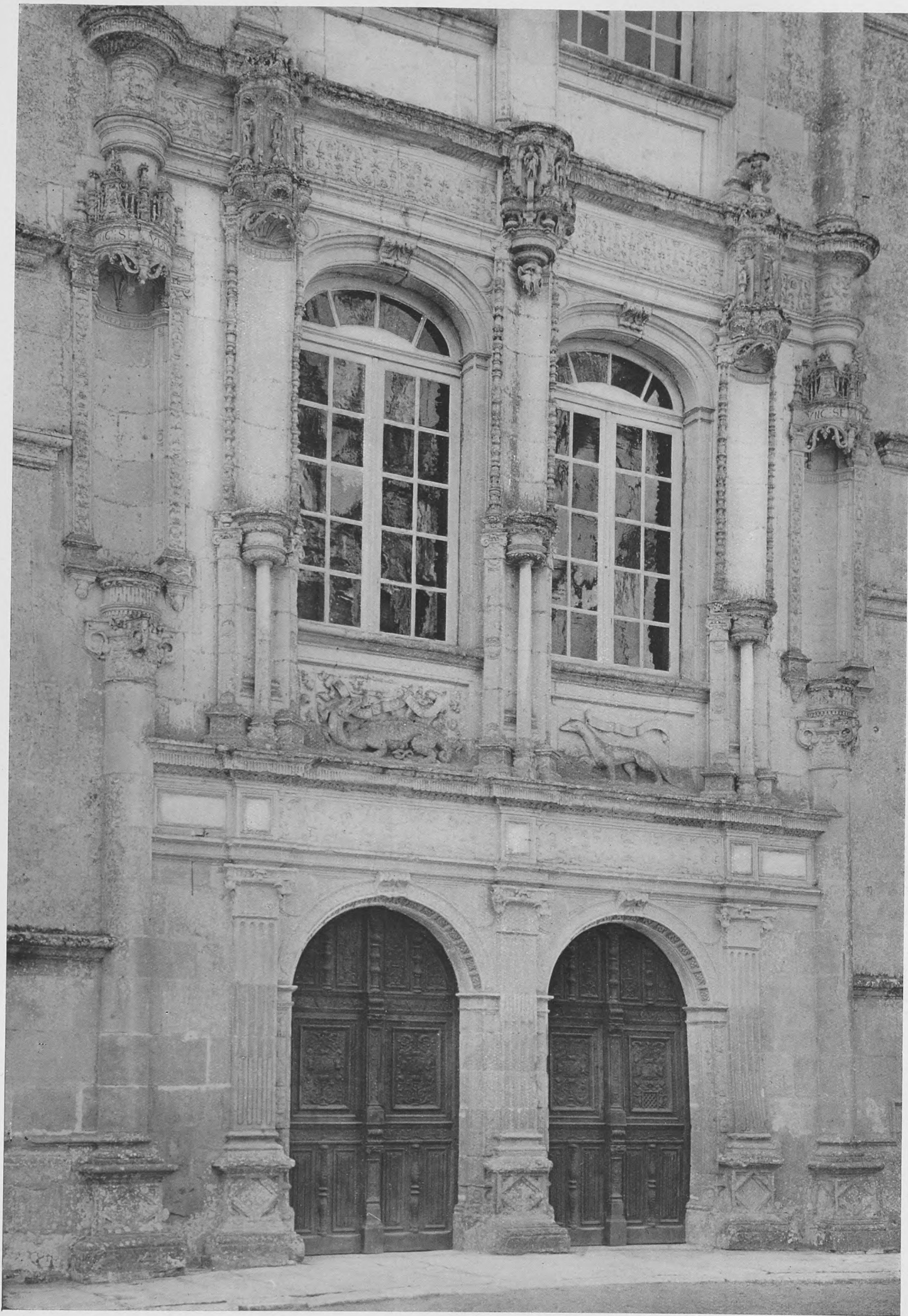
Mr. Reginald Blomfield has set forth with so much mastery of detail and clarity of style all that is known of the old French master-masons that I need only refer my reader to his volumes



245.—FROM THE SOUTH-EAST.

for the facts that have come down to us. But with his conclusions I must be content to differ. "The effect," he says of such work as that of the builder of Azay and the rest, "is often fascinating, but it is due to accident." I cannot believe that anyone who has seen Azay will agree to that. It is profoundly true that any effort to imitate such buildings nowadays must inevitably fail, not only because the conditions which produced them have passed away, but chiefly because trades unions have destroyed the workman's pride in individual excellence; and this is as true of the great cathedrals as of the châteaux of the Loire. But why should the test of good architecture be that it can be reproduced? Why should the excellence of a good architect be his mere obedience to rule? Both of these things may have their value; but I think the work of Azay or of Bourges has something which is superior to either, and I think so without any insistence either on the superiority of "Gothic" to "Renaissance," or on the possibility of reproducing one with better chances of success than the other. Progress in architecture





246.—TWIN DOORWAYS ON ENTRANCE FRONT.

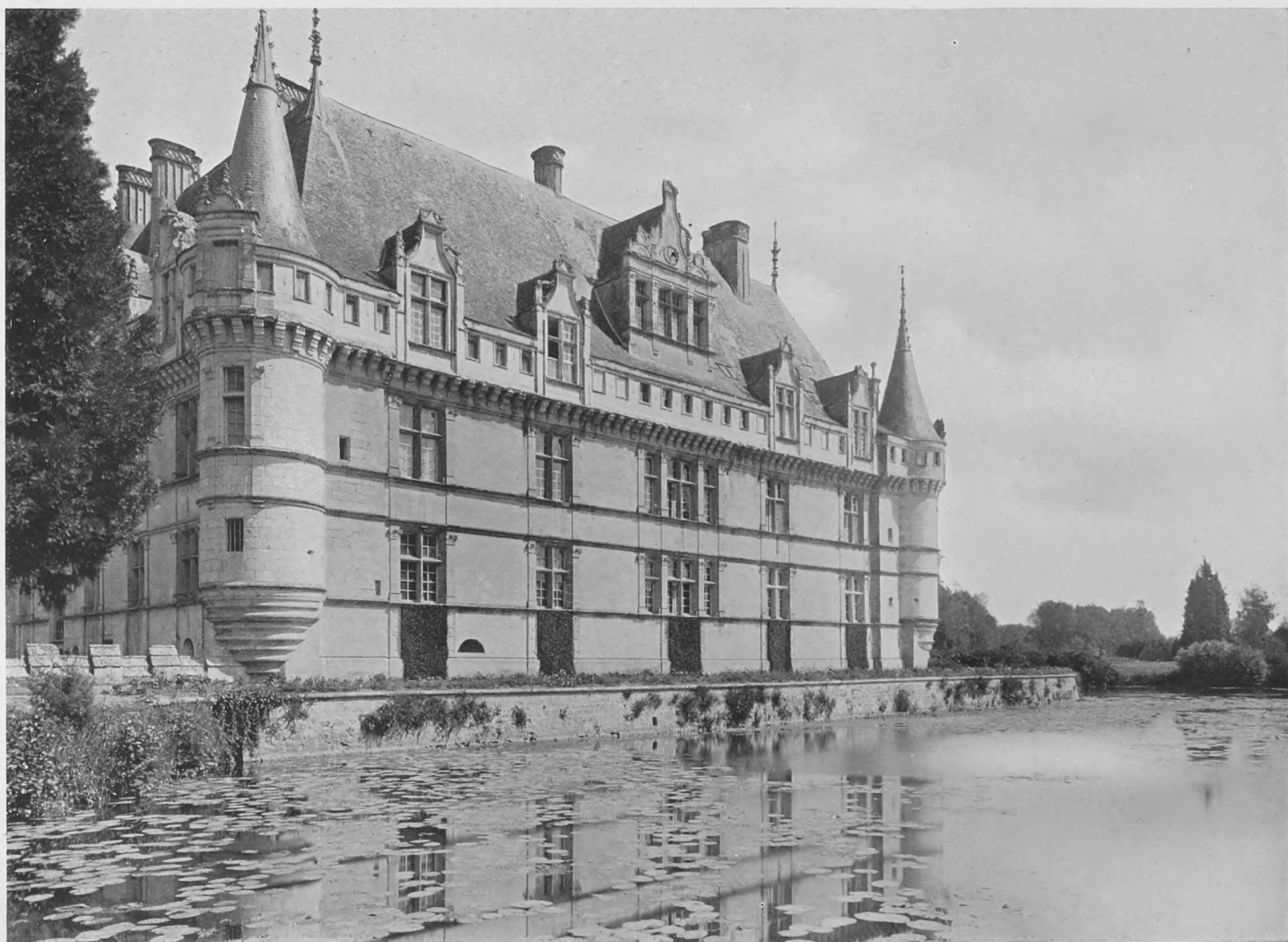


does not imply reproduction. It may imply the use of materials which are traditionally and locally advisable; it may imply the development of old styles of planning or old methods of ornament according to the wider demands of a more enlightened civilisation; but it does also imply, or the whole history of art is meaningless, a freedom of invention, a personal interpretation of the given problem, and a fearlessness of invention that is based upon the scholarship of building. I have no hesitation in choosing Azay-le-Rideau as an example of what I mean; for any building whose fascinations are less "due to accident" I have never found in what those early decades of the sixteenth century have left us.

It is perfectly true that the patriotic enthusiasm of certain French *savants* has too often awarded to "a mere master-mason" the credit of a design which would have been impossible



247.—AN OUTSIDE STAIR.

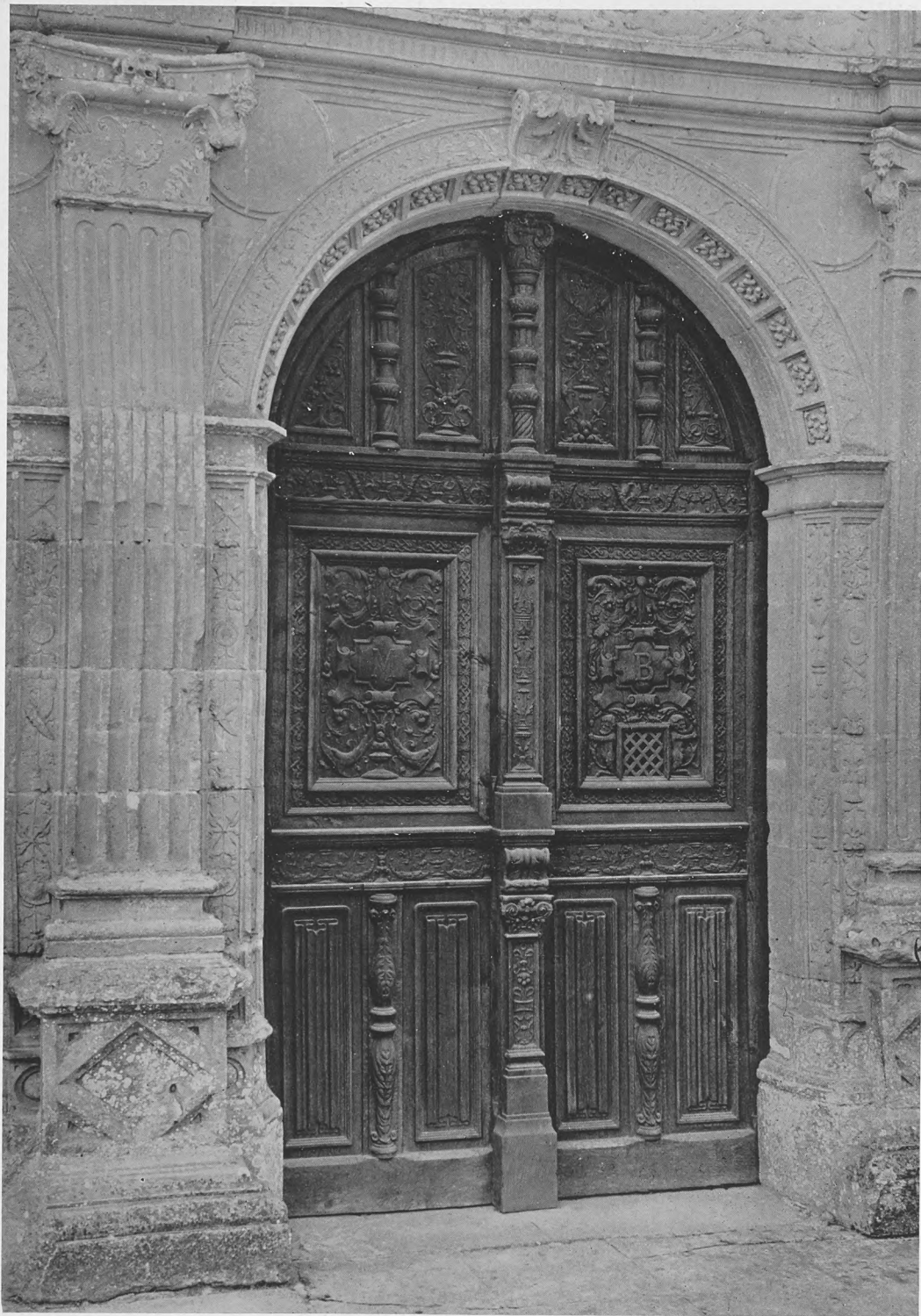


248.—THE SOUTH FRONT.



either to his skill or to his opportunities. And it is still more often the case that in the majority of instances, and more particularly in the Royal castles, there cannot be said to have been any coherent, logical, unified design at all. But the "master-masons" were not only extraordinary stone-cutters, as the staircase of Blois or Chambord bear witness, or the vaulting both of their stairways and their ceilings. Their art was largely inherited from the men who designed and built the cathedrals; and it would be carrying intolerance too far to say that such education involved no capacity for planning; it would also be neglecting the whole course of contemporary history in France. The

cathedrals rose at a period of universal and sincere religious exaltation, when the Church had begun to make it clear that neither the crown of the Emperor nor the tiara of the Pope was a sure passport to that heaven which opened wide its golden gates to men of contrite spirit, to the poor and them that had no substance, to holy and humble men of heart. And that same period saw the rise of the free Communes as well. Before it ended, Louis XI had crushed the last remnants of the old feudality. The first half of the sixteenth century corresponds to a similar period of exaltation among the higher classes. Charles VIII's first invasions of Italy had emphasised modes of life and thought and luxury which many a well born Frenchman envied. France herself, after a long period of famine and warfare within her borders, was beginning to enjoy the blessings of a more established peace.



249.—A CARVED DOOR.

The feudal fortress was no longer needed as a stronghold, either against the foreign invader or the domestic free-lance. Its thick dungeon walls, its narrow windows, its overhanging battlements that could rain down molten lead and stone upon the besiegers, were no longer necessary. Its inmates cried for light and for the broad windows of Italy that let the light in more abundantly. And the master-masons answered that call, without caring to destroy the old buildings they remodelled, as at Josselin or Chenonceaux, or to alter them when there was room to build beside them, as at Loches. The old foundations were too truly laid to be entirely abandoned, so they



built on them, or added to them, and turned the dungeon-fortress into a pleasure palace like Blois, or a hunting seat like Chambord, sometimes with a confused result that only time has mellowed into harmony, but sometimes with a definite purpose that has refused to be trammelled by the old ideals, though it has kept so many of the old traditions; and of this latter kind, the quiet, spacious, lovely country house and nothing else, is Azay. And I am glad that it was built before Philibert de l'Orme or Serlio, because it shows all of their ordered methods that are necessary and preserves not merely an honest admiration for traditional details of construction, but also an originality of treatment which means growth instead of stagnation, which is ready to graft any good thing from Italy upon the old and well tried methods of France, which will give Italian workmen the surface decoration of the wall spaces laid out for that purpose, which sets Italian pilasters beneath the Gothic roofs and the French pointed turrets, and Italian staircases in the rooms of a French Surintendant de Finances. This is neither the stupidity nor the narrow-mindedness of an untrained designer. It is the real capacity of an honest workman who not merely understood his own work, but also understood that it could be improved by suggestions from outside, without losing its essential character.

Azay-le-Rideau is full of such ordered improvements, and it is built upon a logical and consistent and harmonious plan. Whatever the other "master-masons" were, the builder of Azay deserves the name of architect, in spite of Mr. Blomfield's decision that "at the time when Chambord, Chenonceaux and most of the Loire châteaux were being built, the architect—that is, the man specifically trained as a designer of buildings and possessed of expert knowledge of building methods—did not exist." Some of these buildings, no doubt, are "the half articulate efforts of beginners striving to express themselves in an unfamiliar language." But the man who built Azay knew his French, and he used his Italian phrases with an almost equal mastery. He was, in fact, an exception to Mr. Blomfield's somewhat too sweeping rule, and he has all the fascination and originality of an exception, without either the lawlessness of sheer caprice or the barren errors of mere ignorance.

Azay is the earliest instance of a deliberate break with the mediæval style of living-rooms, on a far more advanced plan than Bohier got at Chenonceaux, and a much more mature design than Nantouillet gave Duprat. There are rumours that the master-mason in charge was one Etienne Rousseau, but I can find no documentary evidence whatever in support of that name, or indeed of any other. He was a Frenchman, at any rate, if we may argue from his work. The river Indre flows round it on the north and south façades and then winds away to the west amid a tiny archipelago of islands. No one could have asked a better setting, and few could have taken such good advantage of it. The approach to the charmingly planned forecourt over the lion-guarded bridge is masterly. The outer bands of the different floors are accentuated by the only ornament on the exterior with the exception of the beautifully decorated entrance which supports the stairway. Here are the salamander of François I and the ermine of his first wife. A little arcade connects the ground floor with the upper storeys, on which the pilasters and other members are covered with the daintiest arabesques. They may be Italian both in feeling and in workmanship, but they are here most rightly used, and elsewhere employed both with restraint and judgment. The cornice, which replaced the ancient battlement, is admirably treated. The tourelles, which recall the pinnacled towers of feudal fortresses, are retained in a new and graceful form of corbelled angle-towers.

The founder of its builder's family was Jean Berthelot, Chancellor to Louis XII, who married Pernelle Thoreau, by whom he had a son, Gilles, Treasurer-General to the King, and husband of Philippe Lebès. In 1502 Gilles pulled down the old castle. His three aunts, who had all married well, helped his ambitions in every direction. But his friendship with Jacques de Beaune Semblançay ruined him when the wrath of Louise de Savoie had its way. Though he had won high office both at Court and in his own province, for he was Mayor of Tours in 1520, he had to fly for safety to Cambrai in 1527, and he cannot have lived in Azay for more than about seven years. He was followed there by Antoine Raffin, whose son's widow married Arthur de Cossé, Marshal of France; and their daughter, Antoinette, brought Azay as her dowry to Guy de Saint Gelais. After other vicissitudes of ownership it passed, in 1788, to Charles, Marquis de Biencourt, whose descendants lived there till quite recently, among a gallery of



pictures well-nigh unequalled among the great collections of the Loire. One of these I shall never forget—a magnificent equestrian portrait of Henri II, painted by François Clouet, about 1556. The melancholy King was represented about half life size, on horseback, in a rich Court costume of black with white trimmings, issuing from a great gate on the right of the canvas, and passing slowly to the left in front of a grey wall. The monarch's dark, mysterious eyes looked full at the spectator, distressed, uncertain, unexplained and inarticulate; yet dignified enough, and sombre in his steady outward gaze, the King's figure in black, against the grey background, inspired a curious and sorrowful reality. The picture had disappeared when last I revisited the château, with the same artist's Catherine de Médécis, with the charming Marie Stuart's face, with the lovely form of Anne of Austria. They have vanished now from the legend-haunted walls of Azay, as they have vanished, in fact, from France. But under the care of the French Government, the fate of Azay itself is for the future safe, and those who visit it will find a museum of the French Renaissance in a setting worthy of its rich and rare contents.

All the friends of buildings such as this will welcome the progress notified on our side of the Channel by recent legislation with reference to the Ancient Monuments of the United Kingdom (I add this in March, 1914). A healthier concern for historic relics, an increasing readiness among owners either to safeguard them or to entrust them to the State, give every hope that we shall see fewer buildings ruined either by injudicious "restoration" or by sheer decay. The First Commissioner of Works has set the wise precedent of showing every consideration for the rights of public-spirited owners, and there is every reason to hope that the co-operation he has secured from technically competent advisers will result in a sound national attitude towards these matters and a stimulation of general interest which will rouse even those who may not share it.

I have spoken of the builders of the cathedrals in emphasising the fact that the builders of the great French country houses of the early sixteenth century were their direct descendants; and it is right to add that whereas the cathedral did not consciously aim at either dignity or solemnity, but was rather an act of worship made creative by the intensity of faith, the new château, on the other hand, was a distinct attempt to add dignity to social life, a distinct reaction from the sternness of sheer military necessities and the narrow asceticisms of feudality. This is why its builders welcomed the "humaner arts" of Italy. They had not lost the spirit which built the old cathedrals, which Rodin has so beautifully called "the palpable, tangible soul of ancient France." They cherished "that atom of pure blood transmitted to them through the centuries," which is the great sculptor's definition of "good taste." They forgot neither the sense of race nor the sense of religion, and therefore their true "Renaissance" was the sincere reflection of their lives which all true architecture must be in every age. "Entablatures," said Sir Thomas Jackson, "will not make a building classic, nor will pinnacles and traceries make it Gothic." Sir Christopher Wren's steeple of St. Bride's is as far removed from Vitruvian classic as Salisbury spire. What I want to make clear is that in these days—and more particularly in what I have here written—"Classic stands for strict conformity to rule; Gothic for liberty of expression." We want archæology as little as we want repetition, if architecture is to be a living force, a modern and creative spirit. The art of the past may be a good tutor;



250.—A SALON FIREPLACE.



but it need not be our perpetual model. However much our progress must be based on what has gone before, that progress must be continuous, must be vital. And this is why I prefer the harmonious originality of Azay to any of the rigid classicalisms of the seventeenth century.

Mr. Blomfield is far too broad-minded and enlightened to imagine that I am endeavouring to champion France against Italy or the Gothic style against the Renaissance. These dusty struggles were never fruitful, and they are now quite dead. But I appeal for a true sense of racial history and of artistic development in any modern consideration of these matters. The process of peaceful penetration had gone on between Italy and France long before the campaigns of Charles VIII. Even if we omit all mention of the *Maison Carrée* or the amphitheatres of Nîmes and Arles, it was in 800 that the crowning of Charlemagne in Rome gave the first symptom of that alliance between France and the Papacy which received its most striking illustrations in the election of Bertrand de Got, Archbishop of Bordeaux, in 1305, and in the presence of the Popes at Avignon for more than seventy years afterwards. The frescoes by Simone Memmi's pupils are still in the Palace of the Popes above the waters of the Rhone. And, in the other direction, we have Charles d'Anjou taking possession of the Sicilian kingdom in the Pope's name, holding it till 1285, and passing it on through other heirs to René, Duke of Bar, Touraine and Anjou, Count of Provence, and king of the two Sicilies and Jerusalem. That widespread title is significant of the influence in Italy which began with Charlemagne and inspired the whole essential policy of St. Louis and of Charles V. The scholastic argument that Italy only comes into serious consideration in architecture after Bramante seems to me as misleading as the neglect of all architecture in France before 1550. That date, to my mind, marks the death of what was most vital, most national, most characteristic in all the building France has ever known. From that date onwards she began a professional imitation of a foreign style which eventually led her through the abominable monstrosities of the Rococo to the puerile exaggeration of more modern failures. Her only hope of real "Renaissance" is in the re-birth of that enthusiasm and sincerity with which her own population inspired her builders in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Chartres and her sisters are the Parthenons of France. She has no need of alien inspiration. In them she shows the harmony of counterbalanced forces that is the secret of the living organism, that is the gift of Nature to the sincerest of her students. In them there is that latent grace which strength alone can lend, that play of light and shadow which is the charm of her more northern atmosphere. In them there was that vast appeal to the whole soul of the population which built them, worshipped in them, and saw its life reflected in their sculptured stone. In them is typified that patient energy of an eternal youth which hopes for spring amid the winter gloom, which joys in summer before the fruitfulness of autumn, which passes from one phase of expression to another with the steadfast majesty of the progression of the seasons. The death of ancient Greece was like a sunset in a splendid sky; and all her glory has not faded yet. But the soul of Hellas is not a scheme of columns and entablatures, of pediment and frieze and metope. It is the sense of beauty in the ambient air, the racial expression of the joy of life, the national interpretation of a vivid epoch in the nation's history. Greece, in the century before B.C. 400, accomplished what no other civilisation has surpassed. Between 1150 (Saint Denis) and 1288 (Amiens) France produced architecture never equalled elsewhere in the world again. And the greatness of each of them is rooted in national character, national aptitude and skill. No mixture of the two has ever equalled either. No transmigration of either to an alien soil has ever retained its pristine excellence and power. The French builder of Azay held no diploma; he followed no academic school; his very name has been forgotten; but his skill lives in his building, and it is because he is more French than Italian that I love him. It is because he inherits the blood of his own cathedral builders that he is better than any northland imitator of a Southern school; and therefore I claim for him a portion of his guerdon in the mistress art he loved, at least the style and title of an architect.



CHAPTER XVI.

CHENONCEAUX, INDRE-ET-LOIRE.\*

CHENONCEAUX and Anet, two of the most famous châteaux in France, are linked together by the history of Diane de Poitiers, and the tale of one is incomplete without its appropriate ending in the other. Chenonceaux was the first in which the celebrated Royal favourite lived, and therefore I will begin with its especial story, and tell you of Anet in another chapter; for Anet can well stand alone. It was built by Diane to be her "Dianet," and there is little left there but her memory. Chenonceaux means much more than Diane, and as a typical framework of the characteristic romance of a great French country house, few places could be more worthily chosen to set in the forefront of any series of historic palaces. Its earliest donjon keep was fought for by Katharine Marques. The main pile at the entrance was built by Catherine Briçonnet. The wing across the Cher was set up by Catherine de' Medici upon the arches built for the Duchesse Diane by Philibert de l'Orme. It passed on to the Duchesse de Mercœur and the Vendômes (whom we find at Anet also), and it went safely through the Revolution under Mme. Dupin, to become the property, in 1864, of Mme. Marguerite Pelouze. Mary Stuart, Queen Margot, Louise de Vaudemont, Gabrielle d'Estrées, Marie de Luxembourg, the lovely La Vallière, the artful Mancini—the list of its illustrious visitors is as long as it is fascinating; for Chenonceaux is, above all things, a pleasure built for women by women, and its walls have never been stained with blood. It is also one more example, like Vaux le Vicomte and many another, of the beauties bequeathed to their country by the great financiers. Both Thomas Bohier and his wife, Catherine Briçonnet, were of that widespread family whose branches included Jacques de Beaune Semblançay, Florimond Robertet (who built the Hôtel d'Alluye at Blois), Pierre Legendre, Louis Poncher, Berthelot and other famous predecessors of the unhappy Fouquet. Their fate was, in almost every case, nearly as terrible as his; and if women saved Chenonceaux from the pollution of bloodshed, the financiers gave it a heritage of lawsuits which began in the fifteenth century and lasted till the middle of the nineteenth. With women, or with law, or with finance the history of Chenonceaux, at one time or another, is always inextricably connected, and it is usually somewhat overburdened with the complications of all three at once. The grace, the subtlety, the splendour of its varied architecture represent this triple strand that tints the web of all its fate.

If the almost unparalleled wealth of its archives, as revealed by the industry of Monseigneur Chevalier, has produced more manuscript records of the history of Chenonceaux than almost any other old country house in France can boast, the gardens and buildings on the estate are no less eloquent a testimony to the taste and lavish expenditure of its various owners. For Primaticcio arranged its fêtes and modelled their statuary; the park was laid out by Henry of Calabria and Collo of Messina; Bernard Palissy adorned the gardens; Cardin of Valence built the fountains. But, before all these had got to work, Bohier had given orders for the feudal fortress of the Marques to be turned into a true Renaissance château. All that is left of their first stronghold is the donjon tower (decorated and beautified), which stands before the main entrance in the courtyard, and the ancient masonry of their mill, built on the rocky bed of the river, which forms the foundations of Catherine Briçonnet's country house. For the perfecting of that house her husband, Thomas Bohier, trusted entirely to the great school of native art which flourished in Touraine in the first quarter of the sixteenth century, as a result of the

\* The Property of M. Henri Menier.



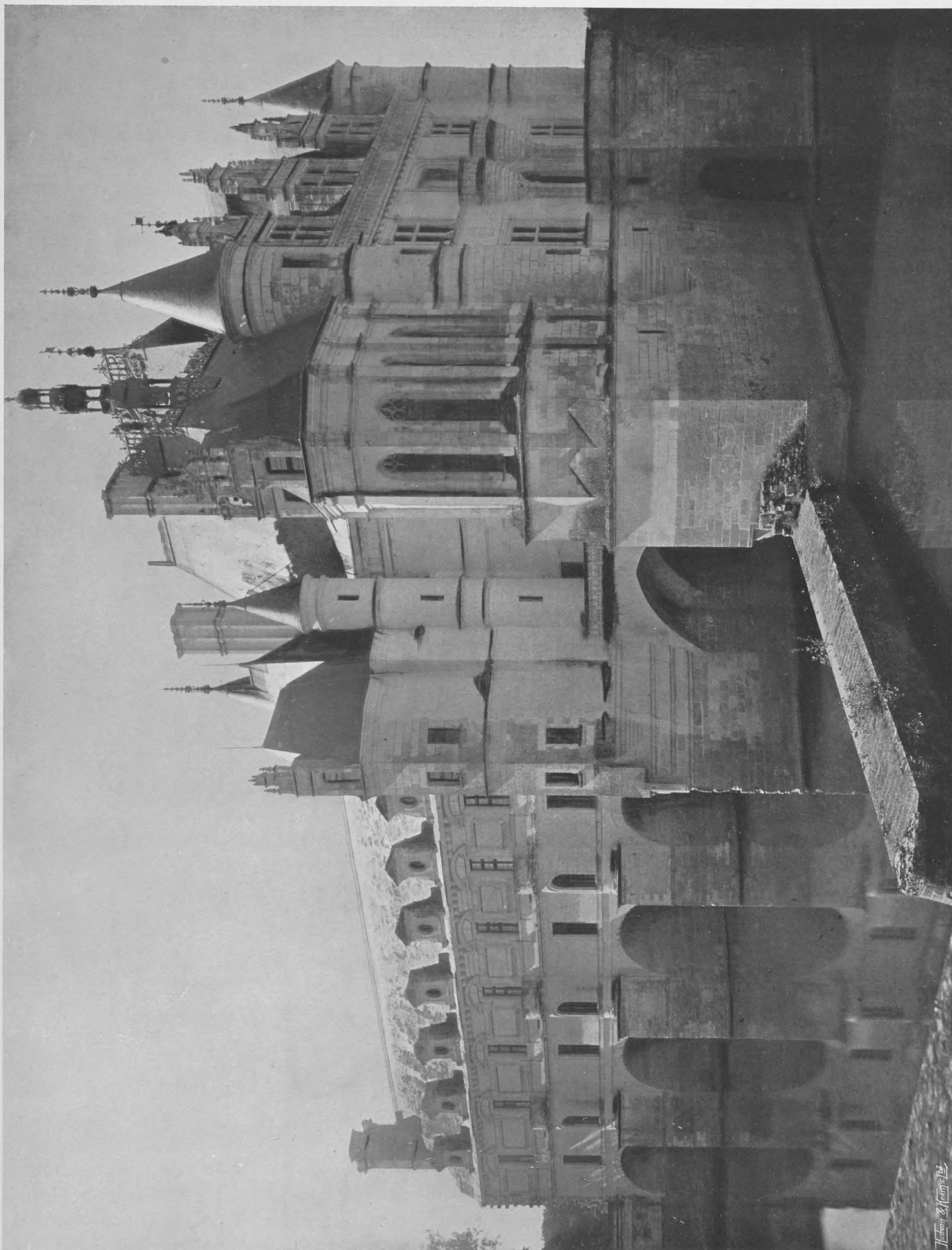
influence of the Italian architects and craftsmen who had settled there since the return of Charles VIII from Naples. The name of the actual architect is, however, unknown.

A splendid avenue of elms and plane trees more than half a mile in length leads to the forecourt guarded by two sculptured sphinxes, and here was the first line of defence of the old fortress of the Marques. It was surrounded by a moat and linked to the second courtyard by a drawbridge leading to the donjon tower, which still stands on the river's brink. Their defences were completed by the fortified mill built on the actual bed of the Cher, which was pulled down when Bohier used its foundations for his new Renaissance château. The Marques originally came from Auvergne, and owned the Seigneury of Chenonceaux as far back as the beginning of the thirteenth century, together with a castle at Francueil, on the opposite side of the stream, which strengthened their position on its banks. This did not save them either from the forays of the Black Prince in 1355, or the ravages of the Free Companies of 1360; and it was in the reprisals undertaken against these latter that Bertrand du Guesclin had to take Chenonceaux by storm during the campaign which freed Touraine from their depredations and attacks. More ill fortune was to follow, for, in the reign of Charles VI, Jean Marques joined the Armagnac faction, and handed over his fortresses to the English troops, a mistake which was bitterly avenged by Marshal Boucicaut, who destroyed Chenonceaux and cut down its forests.

In 1432 Charles VII authorised the reconstruction of the castle by a Seigneur who had now given proofs of loyalty, and who could be of great use in consolidating a chain of defences then reduced to only Amboise, Loches and Chinon, outside the town of Tours itself. This, then, is the date of the feudal tower that stands, transformed, at Bohier's front door, its narrow slits for crossbowmen widened to let in the light, its sternly military outlines brightened by new fantasies of carving, its forbidding entrance gate changed to a welcoming portal. But the reconstructions of Jean Marques in 1432 began a financial ruin which his son Peter's carelessness completed; and Thomas Bohier watched the process with a satisfaction he was the better able to conceal because he was with Charles VIII in Italy. His agent, Jacques de Beaune Semblançay, steadily and quietly bought up Francueil, and as much of the property as he could get, including the mortgages on Chenonceaux itself. At last the screw was put on openly, and the unhappy owners had to agree to a forced sale. But Peter's brother, William, invoked a point of feudal law which considerably delayed matters, and William's daughter fought the case so well that she entered into possession of the family domain at a rent payable to Bohier in lieu of the full capital outlay she could not yet return to him. She married François Fumée, a son of Louis XI's Court Physician, who supported her as strongly as he could; but, being unable to pay either principal or interest, they tried to sell the property to Aymar de Prie, whereon Bohier insisted on a forced sale, as he had every right to do, and bought the place for fifteen thousand six hundred and forty-one livres, equivalent to about twelve thousand five hundred pounds of our currency.

It is curious that when the Marques disappeared from Touraine, another Auvergnat family should have taken their place; for Thomas Bohier was the son of a burgess of Issoire, husband of the aunt of Chancellor Du Prat. As I have said, he married Catherine, daughter of Guillaume Briçonnet of Tours, whose wife was Raoulette, the sister of Jacques de Beaune Semblançay. The excellent Guillaume died a Cardinal-Archbishop of Narbonne, with the added bishoprics of St. Malo, Nîmes and Rheims. Thomas Bohier, who began as Legal Secretary to Charles VIII, was made Financial Controller of Normandy in 1496. Only three other men were equally highly placed in the reigns of Louis XII and Francis I, and their powers of enforcing payment and of authorising the expenditure of public money amounted to little short of sovereignty within their sphere of action. Seventeen years after his appointment Bohier owned Chenonceaux, and within another twelve months the estate was raised to a "châtellenie" by letters patent of Louis XII at Blois; and its ennobled owner did homage to the new King, Francis I, at Rheims in 1515. The records of his continuous purchases of lands all round the castle show the curious fact that the ground was then divided up among some six hundred and twenty-two small holders, who possessed an average of three acres each. It was to Catherine Briçonnet that the supreme task of building her lord and master's home was allotted during his absence on the Italian campaigns, and no doubt it is the impress of her





251.—FROM THE MOAT : NORTH SIDE.



character upon the whole of the original design which so commended the place to the noble and royal ladies who succeeded her. She fully realised the possibilities of such a position as that held by her husband, sovereign over local taxation, exempt himself from every requisition, strong in the immediate support and countenance of the King, and answerable to no one else save to officials who were his own relations. She recognised, too, that a responsibility attached to such possibilities, the responsibility of spending nobly upon splendid aims the money which had come to her through channels that cannot be said to have been invariably above suspicion. Such builders as Catherine and her husband not only developed and directed that artistic movement known as the Renaissance; they are themselves its best explanation. For they represent the successful emergence from the *bourgeoisie* of the commercial class first given its opportunity by Louis XI; they characteristically endeavoured to make the first use of their new-found wealth and position by scattering over France artistic residences, filled with the treasures of Italy, designed by the best of the French artists, as a deliberate challenge and contrast to the dusty ruins in which their rivals, the old feudal nobility, dwelt apart in pride of



252.—APPROACH FROM THE GROUNDS.

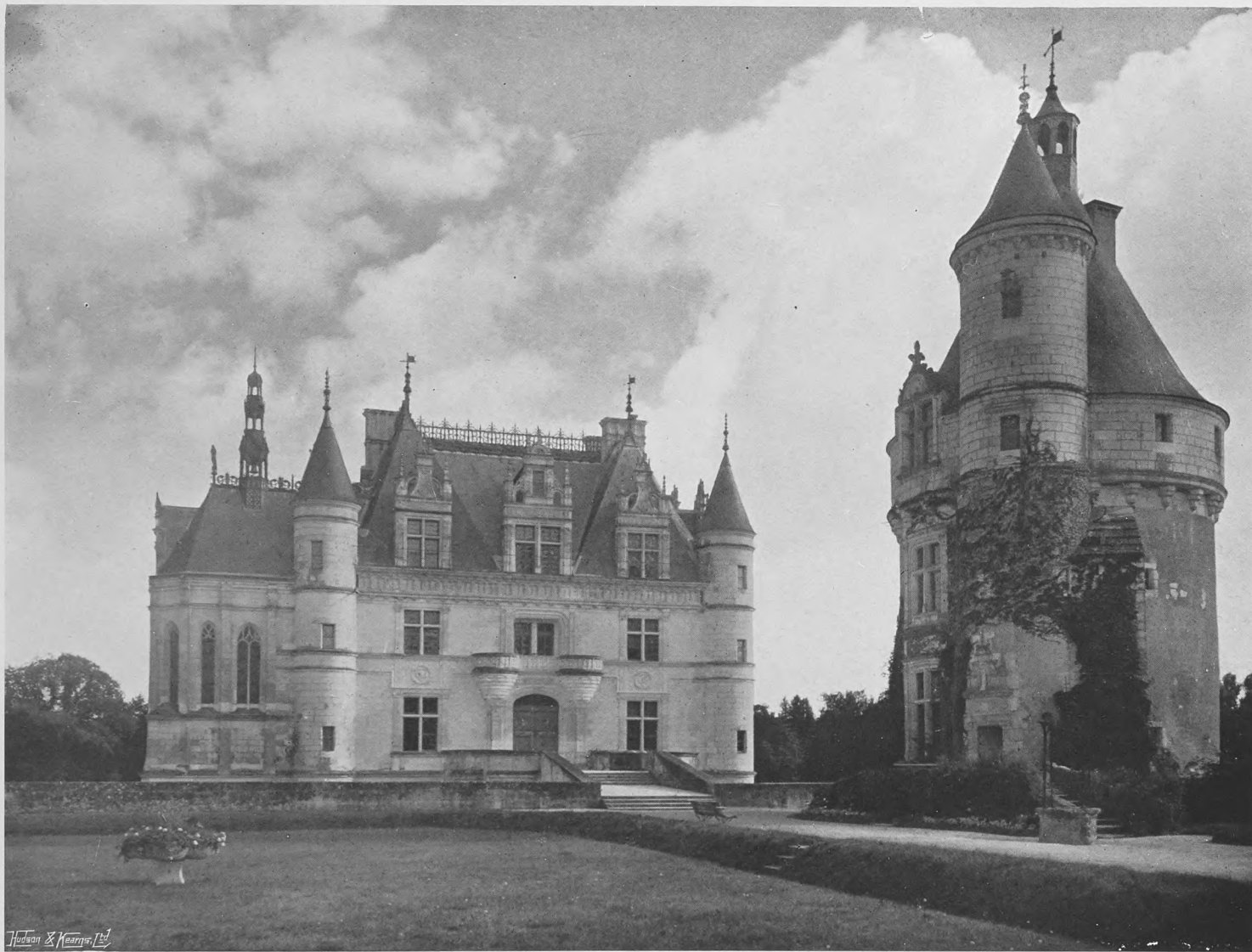
birth. The opening of the donjon walls to the wide windows of the sixteenth century has a significance that is much more than architectural. The bulk of Catherine Bohier's architecture was finished by 1517; her chapel was dedicated by her brother-in-law, Antoine, Cardinal-Archbishop of Bourges, in the next year, and its interior details were completed not later than 1521. The main mass of the masonry rests upon the two huge piles on each side of the arch in which the mill-wheel used to be turned by the water of the Cher. The lightness and beauty of the design are chiefly effected by the graceful treatment of the corner turrets, the chimneys and the dormer windows. Perhaps the finest view is obtainable from the south-west angle of the Duchess Diana's Italian garden, whence you see the eastern façade reproduced in the famous scenery at the Paris Opera in the second act of *The Huguenots*, and you may realise how entirely this plan differs from the old arrangement of building upon three sides of a square, the front of which is occupied by the entrance and donjon keep. At Chenonceaux the necessities of military defence are wholly abandoned, the battlements have become a sculptured frieze, the



apartments are planned wholly with a view to pleasure, and on lines without a precedent in domestic architecture.

The central vestibule opens out to right and left into four saloons, to which must be added, on the east, the chapel and the library, built on the two pointed masses of masonry which were originally designed to break the force of the current in the old days of the mill. The chapel was connected with the library by an open loggia built over the river and protected from the weather by a roof.

The staircase, abandoning the spiral formation of the older styles, is designed after the Italian plan of parallel steps and rectilinear landings, and provides, with Azay le Rideau, one of the best and earliest examples of this arrangement in France. Among the carvings of its doorway is the salamander of Francis I. In the dining-room the effigies of St. Thomas and St. Catherine, sculptured on the door, recall its earliest owners, whose motto



253.—FORECOURT AND DONJON.

is also recorded as "S'IL VIENT A POINT ME SOUVIENDRA," together with their arms, the blue lion for Bohier in the chapel and the golden star of the Briçonnetts. The interlaced initials on some of the ceilings, and common on buildings of the middle years of the century, may be diversely interpreted as the H and C of Henry II and Catherine de' Medici, or the H and D of the King and his beloved Diane. It was the former lady, no doubt, who brought from Italy the medallions and busts of Roman emperors to decorate the vestibule of the first floor, and it was certainly the Italian Queen of Henry II who built upon the bridge which Diane de Poitiers had ordered from Philibert de l'Orme a "gallery" in which the architect displays a very notable instance of the ingenuity with which he could adapt Italian principles to local exigencies. But I think the wing that joins Chenonceaux to the other bank is not in any way so interesting or beautiful as the house which Bohier built upon the old piles of the Marques mill; and it is only



when this part is in the forefront of the view, and the bridge takes a subordinate position, that the place, to my mind, looks its best.

I must linger no longer on the architecture of a house where there is far more history than can be even suggested within reasonable limits. In 1521, the very year when the last details were added to the interior of the chapel, Thomas Bohier, who had seen very little of the home on which his heart was set, left it again for Italy, and left it for the last time. Again the parallel to the tragic story of Fouquet and his Vaux le Vicomte is curiously exact. Bohier, to his sorrow, was Paymaster-General of the Forces in this campaign, and whenever the Swiss mercenaries were hard up they presented the crude ultimatum, "Pay up or we join the enemy." Francis I had ordered four hundred thousand crowns for immediate expenses, which the rapacious and unscrupulous Louise of Savoy stole for her own use, securing the shameful condemnation of Jacques de Beaune Semblançay, later on, for a malversation of which he was entirely innocent. Lautrec, at the front, would have been cruelly embarrassed had not Bohier and his friends come to his rescue with funds out of their own pockets. When the Constable de Bourbon was added to the ranks of their enemies, the French had to retire; and it was on the retreat of 1524, which cost the chivalry of Europe the life of Bayard, that Bohier died at Vigelli on March 24th. He was buried in the town of Tours, of which he had been elected Mayor twenty-seven years before, and two years later the body of his wife Catherine was laid beside him. Their children were Antoine, the heir, Governor of Touraine; François, who inherited the bishopric of St. Malo from his maternal uncle; Guillaume, Bailly of the Cotentin; and Gilles, Bishop of Agde and Dean of Tarascon. The disgraceful treatment meted out to Semblançay, who died unjustly on the gibbet of Montfaucon at the age of eighty-two, must have suggested to the orphan Bohiers a little of what they might expect. But the universal public condemnation of this cruelty only enraged both Louise of Savoy and her son still more. Seven years after his father's death Antoine's estate was declared one hundred and sixty thousand pounds (of our money) in debt to the Treasury. Fortunately Louise of Savoy died soon after this iniquitous announcement had been made, and Antoine Bohier offered money and securities to the amount of one hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds to Francis I, among which Chenonceaux itself appeared as the chief item, at an estimated value of seventy-five thousand pounds. The King accepted this arrangement in 1535, forgave the balance of the alleged debt, and pledged his Royal word, and that of his successors, to uphold the contract for ever, putting Philibert Babou, the Royal Treasurer at Tours, into immediate possession. One Royal visit is known to have resulted, and it was pregnant with consequences. In 1538 the King came to Chenonceaux with his wife, Eleanor of Austria, and his mistress, the Duchesse d'Etampes. In his company was the Dauphin, strictly following the Royal example, with his wife, Catherine de' Medici, and his mistress, Diane de Poitiers—a curious sidelight on the manners and customs of the time. The castle was scarcely furnished, and was little more than a hunting seat, but its charms made a deep impression upon at least two ladies in the Royal party. One of them had not long to wait before the place she coveted belonged to her. Francis I died in March, 1547. In that July Henry II had given Chenonceaux to Diane de Poitiers. I shall not linger too long in this place upon this remarkable lady's character and career, for Anet is a more appropriate setting to them both. But the very typical proceedings by which she fastened her grip upon Chenonceaux may at least be sketched, for they give you an insight into her methods that is worth pages of unsupported criticism.

Diane, when her lover reached the throne, was forty-eight, and had been sixteen years a widow, with a title taken from that same Duchy of Valentino which had been one of the empty honours bestowed on Cæsar Borgia. Among the many gifts she immediately absorbed, Anet was the one least likely to be lost, for it was a family inheritance that had been "in sequestration." Out of the rest she made money as rapidly as possible. Chenonceaux needed careful handling to be made secure. By a clause specially inserted in the Royal deed of gift, the estate, bestowed "in reward for the patriotic services of her late husband," was declared never before to have been legally incorporated in the Royal domain, and its new owner is given every right to enforce against the Bohier estates any shortcomings discovered in the valuation of 1535. Diane proceeded to make sure of her prey. The unhappy Antoine was summoned, in 1550, to defend





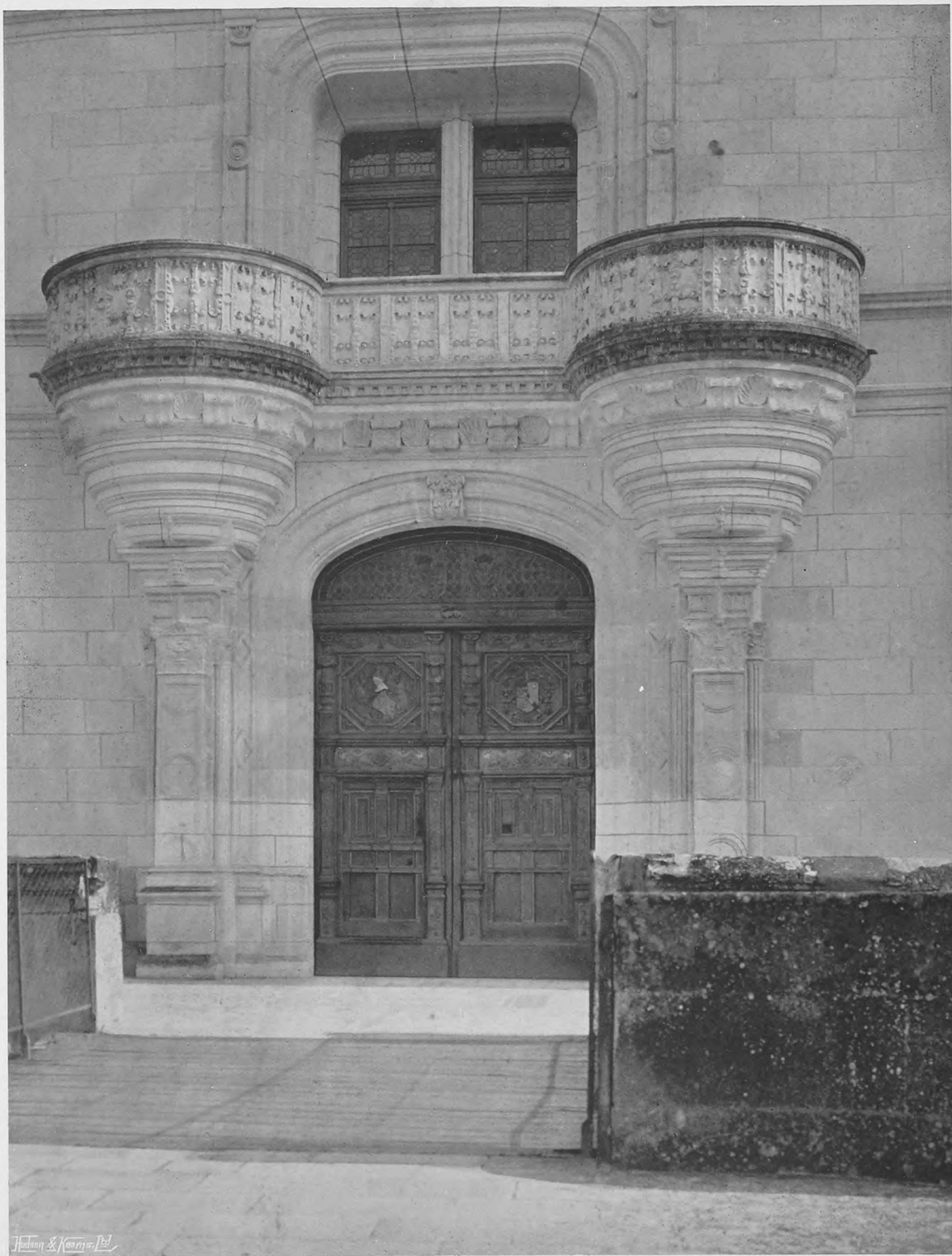
254.—OLD WELL BY THE DONJON.



himself against a charge of fraudulent valuation in the transactions of fifteen years ago, and found to his surprise that the late Sovereign's plighted word (as already set forth) was to be entirely disregarded by the Privy Council, to whom the case was sent. He forthwith hurried off for change of air to Venice. Though a Gentleman of the Bedchamber, a Privy Councillor, a Governor of Touraine and a Financier-General, he knew when to give way to a lady, and he preferred to carry on negotiations at a distance. He remembered his two uncles, Jacques de Beaune Semblançay and Jean Poncher, both hanged high and dry upon the gibbet of Montfaucon; and he decided to study architecture and commerce by the waters of the Lido. His name was shouted through the streets of Lyons as if he had been a strayed horse. But he stayed snug in Venice for two years, leaving a power of attorney with his wife, who was always well treated at the French Court, in case he might come back to her. Can you wonder at the grim satire of the "Chats Fourrés" in so many bitter chapters of Rabelais? At last the Council decided, in 1554, that the transactions of 1535 were annulled, save and except the cash balance of the debt specifically forgiven by Francis I. This, of course, left the fate of Chenonceaux itself still

open, and made it evident also to all good lawyers that the estate had never formed a legal portion of the late King's Royal property. It belonged, in fact, as you may plainly see, to the recalcitrant Antoine, who scandalously remained in Venice instead of paying his just debts to the Crown. The title deeds were hurriedly despatched to him, and as the cash was not immediately forthcoming from him for the Royal Treasury, the debtor's estate of Chenonceaux was forthwith put up to public auction, in all due legal form, to satisfy the Royal claim.

In January, 1555, the Duchesse Diane, who had been quietly improving her property, "let it be known" that she



255.—THE ENTRANCE DOORWAY.



would bid. Singularly enough, there was no advance made, and the place was duly adjudged to her as the highest bidder in June, 1555. In exchange for the title deeds Bohier was generously pardoned any further outstanding differences apparent in the letters patent issued in November, 1556, and this terminated about as disgraceful a proceeding as ever any lady blackened her pretty fingers withal. I cannot resist a satisfaction—which I know the reader will share—in the thought that, in spite of everything, Catherine de' Medici seized Chenonceaux the moment her husband died, only to die bankrupt herself, and that the tedious chicanery of the Duchesse de Valentinois, which had benefited neither herself nor her even more repulsive rival, eventually provided Mme. Dupin with sufficient evidence to save Chenonceaux from destruction as a Royal domain during the horrors that followed the Revolution. This is why the château is one of the few great houses of France which were not wrecked at the end of the eighteenth century. So Antoine Bohier's misfortunes served a good end after all. The home his father loved so much was, by the very jealousy and strife its beauties raised, preserved from the mutilation and decay that ruined many a palace of more princely origin. It need scarcely be said that Diane had been far from idle while the lawyers worked. If lengthy legal proceedings seemed necessary for her eventual safety, there was nothing to prevent her immediate enjoyment of the King's gift, and within a few months of Henry II's accession her workmen were installed at Chenonceaux. Her first care was for the gardens, which she laid out after the Italian style introduced by Charles VIII's favourite "Horticulturist," Messire Pacello da Merco-

gliano; and the terraced space on the right bank of the Cher to the eastward of the château was the result of fourteen thousand working days from the spring of 1551. Nicquet of Tours planted in it the trees offered by loyal inhabitants from all the country round. Cardin de Valence carved its fountains, Philibert de l'Orme designed the bridge which Pierre Hurlu and Jean Philippon built in 1556 and Jean Norays finished. The King paid for all, and every penny of the accounts is still in the archives of the château. There is not a single item among them of charity to the poor. In 1559 the King was dead, and Catherine de' Medici turned out the favourite within four months. She did it cleverly enough, masking her private vengeance by urging Parliament to supply an empty Treasury by annulling the Royal bounties of the last two Kings and devoting the proceeds to the public weal. "Put not your trust in Princes" might be written on the walls of Chenonceaux. Diane read the omens and recognised her enemy. Chaumont was offered her in consolation; but she died at Anet seven years later.

Chenonceaux to-day is very much as Catherine de' Medici left it, and with her completion in 1576 (from Philibert de l'Orme's designs) of the wing upon Diana's bridge across the Cher,



256.—DETAIL OVER THE DOORWAY.



the place received the final expression of its many builders' personalities. They were all women, and, curiously enough, Chenonceaux never flourished, in its elder days, when a man was its sole master. Perhaps its most brilliant period was that inaugurated by the Queen whose memory and character are so repellent to me that I can never hope to treat her with the judicial fairness of an unbiassed historian. So I will say as little of her here as possible; of the marvellous fêtes she made for Francis II and Mary Stuart; of her frail and fascinating *escadron volant*; of the foul brood of her children—the mad Charles IX, the vicious

and effeminate Henry III; of her squalid death at Blois, beneath the rooms that dripped with the blood of murdered Guise; of the bankruptcy that set her desperate creditors battering at the gates of Chenonceaux, where quiet Queen Louise, "la Reine Blanche," waited and prayed for her release.

By the desire of Henry IV a marriage was arranged between Louise's niece, Françoise de Lorraine, daughter of her brother, the Duc de Mercœur, and César de Vendôme, son of the Vert Galant and Gabrielle d'Estrées, and to this new Cæsar passed the home of Catherine Briçonnet in 1601. He cared little enough either for its beauty or its associations; and the projected



257.—DOOR TO SALLE A MANGER.

marriage only came off eight years afterwards. His mother, the Duchesse de Mercœur, lived there in his stead, and filled the garrets in the roof with monks, who stayed there till she died at Anet in 1623. For many a long year afterwards Chenonceaux was utterly neglected, recovering, as it were, from the shock of the long proceedings resulting from the bankruptcy of Catherine de' Medici—proceedings which had followed with such sinister persistence upon the lawsuits of Diane and the entanglements of Bohier. Even in their absence, the Vendômes brought on the place its inevitable fate again. Their extravagance produced the



brokers, and many of Queen Catherine's most cherished Italian works of art had to be sold at auction. It was a depleted Chenonceaux that Anne de Bourbon-Condé, Duchess of Vendôme, left to her mother, the Princess of Condé, in 1718; and it was only when the Duc de Bourbon sold it to Claude Dupin, in 1733, that some measure of its old prosperity returned. Now Claude Dupin was just such another Financier-General as its builder, Bohier. The whirligig of Time was at last working compensation.

Again it is a woman who is the chief connection between Chenonceaux and the family who held it in the middle of the eighteenth century; for it was in Mme. Dupin's salons that the social and literary celebrities of France met—Fontenelle, Bernis, Buffon, Voltaire, the Princess de Rohan, Lady Hervey and Mme. de Mirepoix; and in 1742 Jean Jacques Rousseau became her secretary. He had before then been tutor to her sons, the younger of whom married Marie-Aurore, natural daughter of Marshal Saxe, and had a son, Maurice Dupin, who was the father of Georges Sand. Such freaks of genealogy have always interested me, and in this case they form a curious link between Chambord and Chenonceaux, though they are not as strange as the blood relations of the family of Diane de Poitiers, which I shall mention elsewhere. Mme. Dupin herself, the patron of Jean Jacques, was a natural daughter of Samuel Bernard the banker and an actress, who was in turn the fruit of a temporary union between Dancourt, the playwright, and Thérèse Le Noir La Thorillière, a celebrated beauty of the footlights. The best tribute to Mme. Dupin's qualities, both of heart and head, is that in 1789



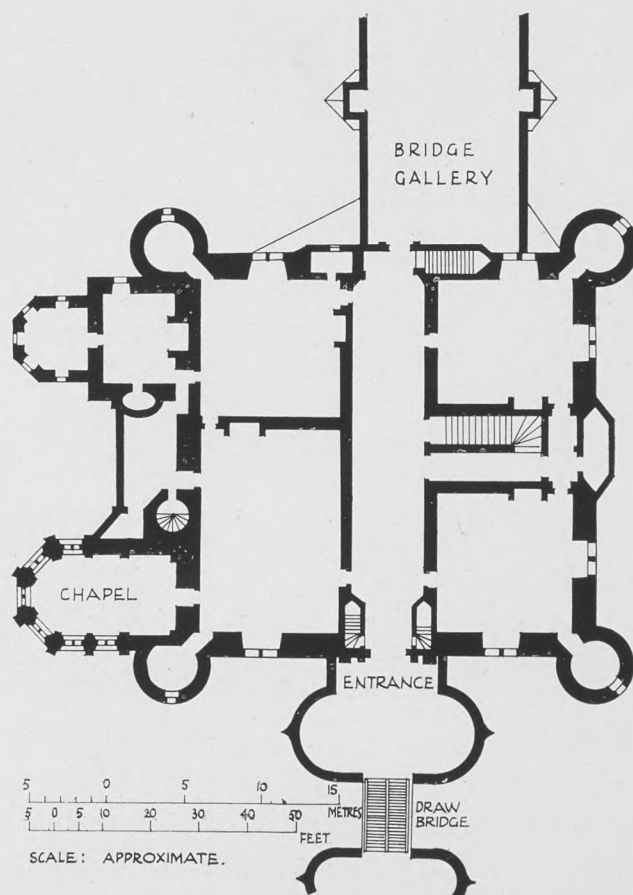
258.—DETAILS OF FRONT DOOR.

Chenonceaux was untouched amid the universal wreckage, and that in 1790 she held good, even against the Revolutionary lawyers, the claim established by Diane de Poitiers two hundred and forty years before, that Chenonceaux had never been a Royal castle. It was inherited in 1799 by her great-nephew, the Comte de Villeneuve, who married his cousin Adelaide, daughter of the Comte de Guibert, who had died in 1790 after various gallant passages with Mlle. de Lespinasse. This soldier's *Essay on Tactics* attracted the attention of Napoleon to his son, and it was the Chatelain of Chenonceaux who had the honour of announcing the birth of Prince Louis, the future Napoleon III.

The heirs of this Comte de Villeneuve sold the castle to another distinguished lady, Margaret, daughter of Daniel Wilson, the canny Scot from Glasgow, who made a fortune by lighting Paris with gas, and whose son became Deputy for the Indre-et-Loire and Under-Secretary of State to the Treasury. Margaret married Eugène-Philippe Pelouze, chairman of the great Parisian Gas Company, and son of the illustrious chemist. By Mme. Pelouze was ordered the little restoration that was necessary (at the hands of Félix Roguet, architect, of



Dijon) to bring back to Chenonceaux something of the splendour it had known in the early days of Catherine de' Medici, and by their enlightened care the open loggia over the river between the chapel and the library, which the Italian Queen had built over, was once more opened up as Catherine Bohier had designed it. The staircase from the first floor to the second was also rebuilt in 1870, exactly on the model of the lower one; and the various theatrical additions, introduced by Mme. Dupin for Rousseau's atrabilious comedies, were cleared away to give space for the magnificent chimney-pieces on the first floor that record the victories of Francis I and the memory of Catherine de' Medici. The Italian gardens of Diane de Poitiers were also restored to their old ordered splendour; and though when I first saw the place it was temporarily in the hands of the Crédit Foncier, that momentary embarrassment (without which no period of the history of Chenonceaux seems complete) soon passed away, and one of the loveliest chateaux of Touraine now once more enjoys the advantages bestowed by the grace of habitation and the benefits of a wealth that has no connection with its previous records.



259.—PLAN.



CHAPTER XVII.

ANET, EURE-ET-LOIR.\*

ANET must be looked at by the traveller of to-day as a mere fragment of the great house which Philibert de l'Orme built in 1550 for Diane de Poitiers. But two of the most essential features of the original construction still remain : the entrance and the chapel. They are as characteristic of the architect as of his patroness, who was invariably careful of her exits and her entrances throughout the stately drama in which she played an almost royal part and swayed the destinies of France with greater vigour than the king himself. The larger portion of her lordly pleasure-house upon the banks of Eure has vanished ; but many of its treasures, restored to the nation she so cynically plundered, may yet be seen in the museums of the people she oppressed. The people have had their revenge. They have even torn her from her stately tomb and hurled the body that was the wonder of her world into the common fosse. But they can never efface her memory from the history or the art of France ; and though there is less left of Anet than of Chenonceaux, or any of her homes, it is at Anet that you may best realise the woman ; so I shall stay your footsteps before her splendid portal with its royal stag and tell you more of her before we follow her within. If I were tempted to see further allegories in its architecture, I might point to the disproportionate figure of Cellini's nymph above the centre gate, which dwarfs and spoils the composition of the whole ; and I might moralise on that colossal egotism, that cold rapacity, which vitiate the whole personality of the scheming Duchess. But her life shall point its own moral.

Mlle. Diane was born in 1499, the daughter of Jean de Poitiers, Seigneur de Saint Vallier, and Comte de Valentinois, on the Rhone. This is the man who was arrested by the officers of Francis I, with the Bishop of Autun, Emard de Prie, Vauguyon and other traitors who were



260.—ENTRANCE GATE.

\* The Property of M. le Vicomte de Leusse.



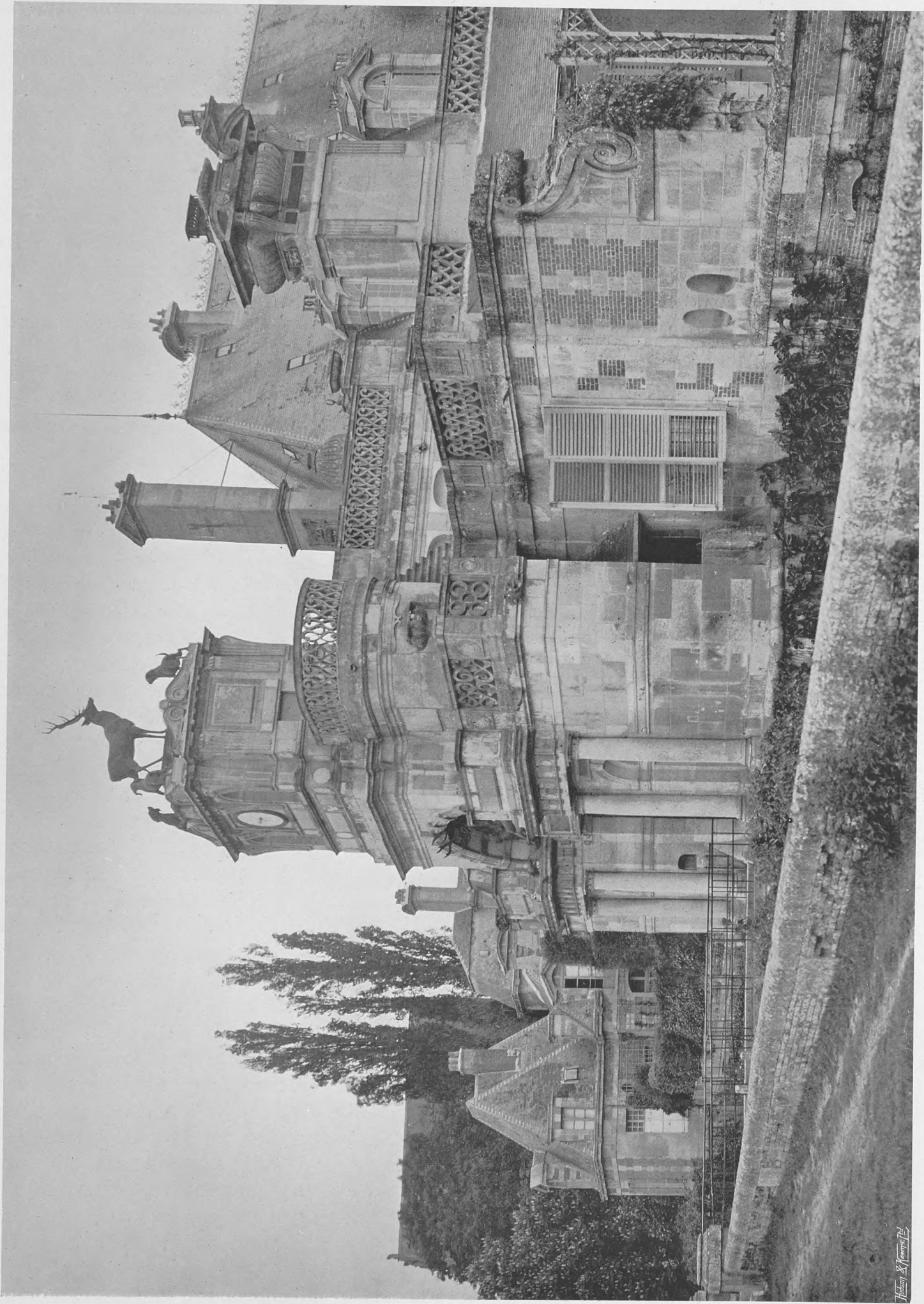
assisting the conspiracy of the Constable Charles de Bourbon, in 1523, chiefly on the information of the Grand Seneschal of Normandy, and it was only Diane's personal entreaties that prevailed on the enraged king to release the father whom a husband had imprisoned for two years of misery in the dungeons of Loches, at the very foot of the scaffold. He was a descendant of that Aymar de Poitiers who married Marguerite de Sassenaye, the mistress of Louis XI. The undoubted beauty of Diane must have matured rapidly, for she was scarcely sixteen when she was married to Louis de Brézé in the Hôtel de Bourbon in Paris, in presence of the King and Queen and all the Court (1515), so that she was very early initiated into Royal circles, and it is no surprise to find her name third in the list of twenty-six "maids of honour" in 1530. She was far from being either unknown or unappreciated by Francis I. Louis de Brézé, her husband, one of the ugliest men in France, was old enough to have been the godson of Louis XI, whose natural sister was his mother; for he was the grandson of Agnes Sorel, mistress of Charles VII. By this latter monarch Anet had been given, in 1444, to Pierre de Brézé, Seneschal of Normandy (an office which seemed hereditary in the family), for brilliant services against the English; but Pierre (whose wife was Jeanne du Bec-Crespin) could only clear himself of the suspicion of



261.—WITHIN THE COURT.

treachery that was not unreasonably present in the mind of Louis XI by falling bravely enough (as Commynes tells us) in the front rank at Montlhéry in 1465. Before that time, however, he had seen his son, Jacques de Brézé, Comte de Maulévrier, brilliantly married to Charlotte de France, daughter of Agnes Sorel and Charles VII, and from her were born Louis de Brézé, in 1463, and four other children. But the alliance had a tragic ending. On Saturday, May 31st, 1477, being the eve of Trinity Sunday, Jacques was at a hunting-lodge called the Ferme de la Couronne, within a few miles of Anet, and had gone alone to bed. At midnight he was roused by his steward and his barber, who brought tidings that his wife Charlotte had invited Pierre la Vergne, the Master of the Hunt, to the bedroom above her husband's apartments. He rushed up, sword in hand, killed them both, and buried her paramour forthwith in the garden. The guilty wife, as befitted her descent, was given a more formal funeral in the Abbey of Coulons. Unluckily, Louis XI, never an indulgent Sovereign, was not at all disposed to leniency towards the slayer of his favourite sister; and the Grand Seneschal of Normandy, who had come up at once to Paris in the full confidence of an acquittal, found himself hurled into the dungeons of



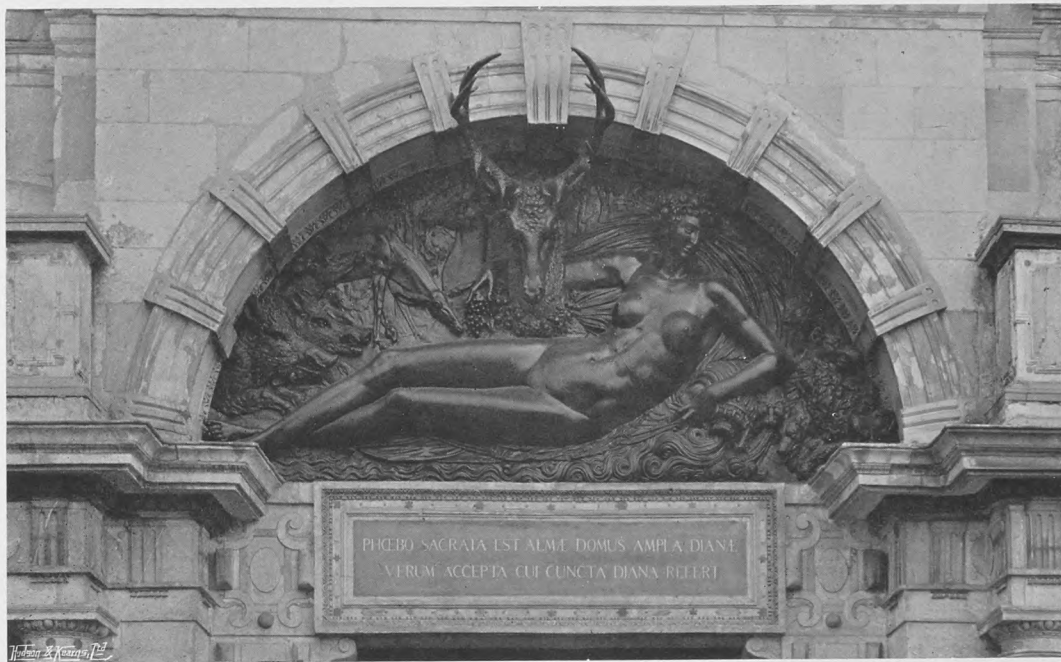


262.—FACADE FROM THE ROAD.



the Conciergerie. There, and in other prisons, he was left to languish, until a fine of one hundred thousand gold crowns had been imposed in 1481, which meant a forced sale of Anet to raise money for the payment. But the new King was evidently not so certain that the innocence of Agnes Sorel's daughter was above reproach; for in 1486 Anet was restored to Jacques by Charles VIII, and five years afterwards his son, Louis de Brézé, was doing homage for his new inheritance. The first wife of Louis was Catherine de Dreux. His second, whom he married when she was sixteen and he was fifty-five, was Diane de Poitiers, daughter, as I have said, of the Seigneur de Saint Vallier and of Jeanne de Bastarnay, his wife, an offshoot, curiously enough, of that very house of Medici which gave France the Queen who was Diane's greatest rival. It will complete this little sketch of genealogical complexities if I add that Mme. Diane had two daughters by her husband, the Grand Seneschal, one of whom married Claude de Lorraine, Duc d'Aumale, who inherited Anet at her death, and secured for her the support of the powerful family of the Guises during her life, while the other was wedded into the great house of la Marck. Of this latter, a daughter, Antoinette de la Marck, married Henry d'Amville, son of Diane's firm old friend, the Constable de Montmorency; and their daughter, who married the son of Charles IX and Marie Touchet, became the grandmother of the great Condé. The woman whose family history thus shows the traces of so many mistresses of the

Kings of France was herself perhaps the most famous of all who ever held that perilous position. She certainly understood the business side of it much better than the others who preceded or came after her. Her beauty was an asset of which she took so much care that it outvied even the unstudied charms of youth. We can realise it better than is often the case with celebrated ladies from the portrait Francis I himself commended, from contemporary crayons and



263.—THE NYMPH: BY BENVENUTO CELLINI.

models, from the work of Jean Goujon, from the painting at Althorp, from the monument upon her tomb. The most striking characteristic of her face was the brilliancy of its pale complexion beneath the bands of dark reddish hair, a brilliancy which was the permanent and calculated result of health and cold water. Decision of character is marked in the firm lines of every feature, in the proud curve of the lips that are never sensual, in the high, narrow forehead that bounded a clear brain, swift to resolve, pitiless to execute, contemptuous of mere romance, imaginative in avarice alone. In the expression there is no womanly tenderness, but something of that serene animality you may see in a Greek goddess, something of that chill virginal charm which is typified in the pale crescent of her badge or the cold curves of her bow and arrow. Her policy through life had been decided, we may well imagine, by the girl of scarce sixteen who married the Grand Seneschal. She was to begin as a devoted, unobtrusive, loyal wife and mother. She was all three until her husband died. Then developed another career, equally clear cut, equally decisive. She was to go on as a widow, devoted to the memory of the illustrious defunct, a pale goddess of remote, aristocratic grief, only to be consoled by thoughts of Heaven, only to be distracted by the highest Art, only to unbend before the Throne, or the Throne's next occupant; above all, impregnable; a chaste fortress behind a moat of ice. It all worked like a charm. It not only gave her the best material prizes to be won; it allowed



her the full gratification of the most feminine of sentiments, for the open passion she inspired in the slow, strong heart of the melancholy Dauphin was too obvious to need the emphasis of any public acquiescence; she could well afford to remain unapproachable to every other questioner, to allow the waves of scandal to break unheeded against the strong rock of an indifference that had gained its end. She seemed a body without any soul, animated only by



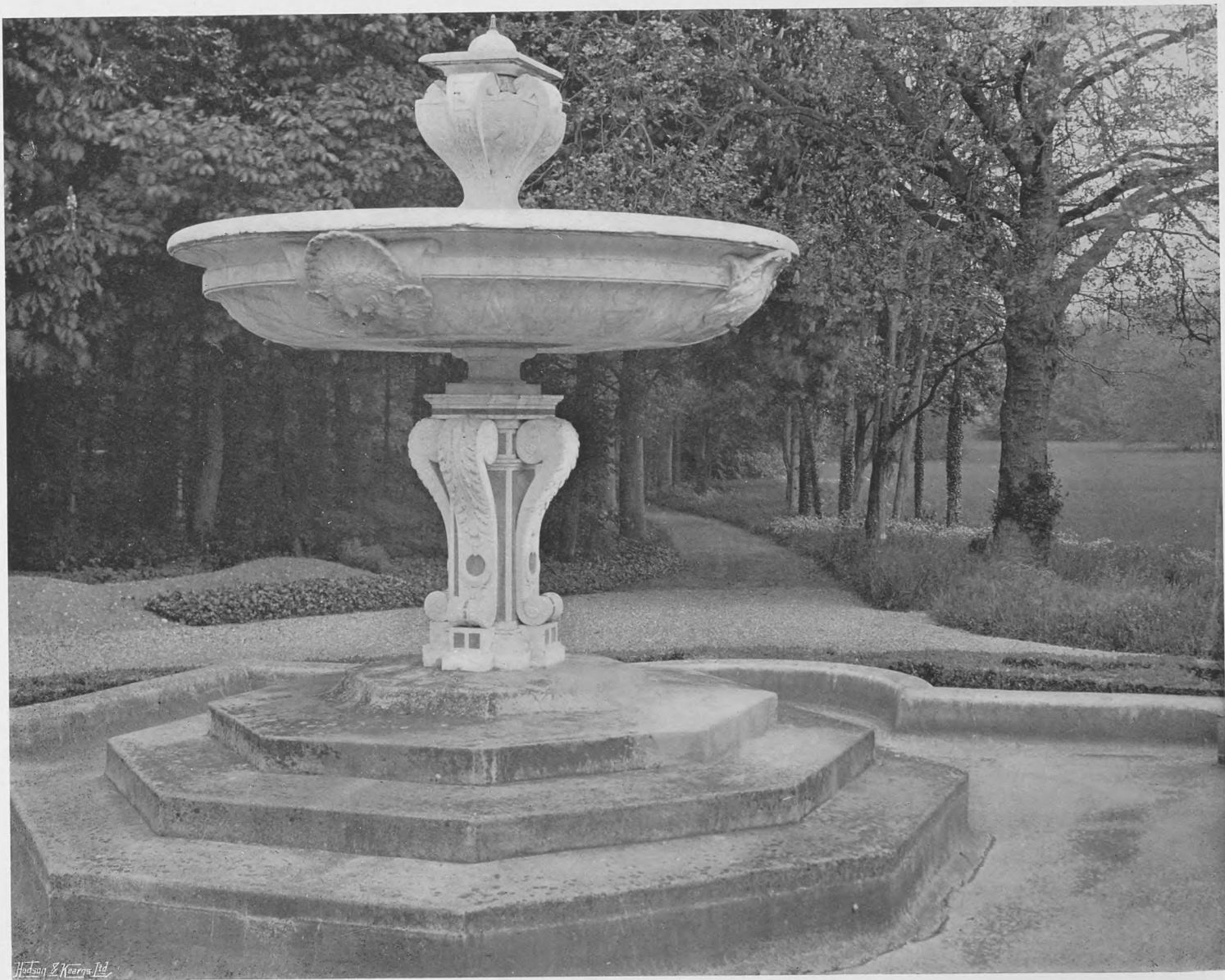
264.—ENTRANCE GATEWAY.

a keen, remorseless mind. So, being saved from any of that shipwreck which unbridled passion sometimes brings, her mind remained the instrument of subtle finance and diplomacy which so well served her unflinching purposes, and her body retained to the end that impassive, cameo-like charm of exquisite proportion, of subdued yet perfect colour, which is the magic gift of an untroubled health. Death itself had but little power, it seems, over that well-nigh



imperishable spell. On June 18th, 1795, her body was torn from its sepulchre by the furies of the Revolution, and carried through the streets of Anet to the common fosse. It showed white, impassive, perfect, still. Within her coffin were the bodies of two daughters she had borne to Henry II. It was the first time history had known of their existence. "Accidents du mariage," you can almost hear her saying. "Inconvenances de la galanterie." It was good they should be unknown during their short lives; they were buried beside her, since they realised that they were better dead.

Blood runs hot sometimes in the Valley of the Rhone, but Diane was married almost as soon as she could realise she was a woman; and the strong combativeness of the South was rightly mated, in her case, to the constant lawsuits, the perpetual bargainings of Normandy. She soon learnt the income to be made upon the Bench. The tale of harassed Bohier, at



265.—FOUNTAIN MADE FOR DIANE DE POITIERS.

Chenonceaux, is good evidence of that. Rabelais' *chats fourrés* became her favourite type. Rapacity remained her motto. When the Dauphin became King she was given all property confiscated from the Protestants, and she sat beside her paramour while they were burnt before her eyes; she was given all vacant lands and goods concerning which the heirs were engaged in litigation; she was given the fines levied on all who revolted in despair from such extortions; she was given the fees paid by every new official or every holder of an office who desired his rights confirmed in the new reign. She was given Chenonceaux, the Duchy of Valentinois and a dozen other huge estates. So she had quite money enough to give Philibert de l'Orme a free hand at Anet. It was the place in which Henry II took more interest than in any of his palaces. The goddess carved for Fontainebleau by Cellini was taken for its entrance gate. The fountain that resumed and typified the graces of its garden was the masterpiece of Goujon.



You may see it in the Louvre to-day. It is a magnificent interpretation of the mistress of Anet. The gorgeous bracelets, the wondrous artifice of the headdress, its crowning diadem of jewels—these are her sole attire, these and the cold, pure chastity that veils the naked figure—not entirely virginal, yet not one whit seductive. The drooping eyelids seem to shade the fire her glances might betray; the delicate outlines are the guerdon of an imperishable youth. The Royal



266.—PHILIBERT DE L'ORME'S CHAPEL AND FOUNTAIN.

stag is close beside her, the hounds are at her feet. Is she the woman who has held the King's heart captive in her strong, slight fingers? Is she the Divine Huntress of the Night whose silver influence moves the tides of ocean, whose crescent rises proudly in the sky . . . *donec totum impleat orbem?* The whole enigma which she must have been to her contemporaries



is fashioned here in the unerring, suave lines of the only statue ever so produced by Goujon : the statue of the Queen of Anet. It was the appropriate genius of surroundings that were typical of their first owner. The real life of Diane de Poitiers has never been written, and I do not propose to write it here. But, lest it should be thought that I have exaggerated the lengths to which cold-blooded policy could carry a woman who never had the excuses of frank natural passion, I will only remind you now that after she had wholly secured the Dauphin's heart and soul, she insisted that he should treat the neglected Catherine de' Medici as his wife, watched over the Italian when she was ill and actually helped to bring up and educate the poisonous brood of children she produced for the calamity of France. This fact, and another, that she was never known to have given away a farthing in the cause of charity, are partly my reasons for giving an estimate of her which is not wholly in accordance with that generally

accepted. The truth that she was a munificent patron of French art has nothing to do with that estimate, for art and morals have nothing to do with one another. Philibert de l'Orme, Jean Cousin, Bullant, Goujon, would have worked out their masterpieces if she had never lived. Her real depravity would have been even more evident were it not screened by the glamour of their great achievements.

The complete beauties of Anet will never be known again as they were known and sung by Joachim du Bellay, by Saint-Gelais, by all the Court poets of the time. But by what remains for us to see we can judge something of the vanished splendours that have been often catalogued and praised. By no one has this laborious love of what is lost been better expressed than by Mr. Reginald Blomfield, to whose brilliant sketch of Philibert de l'Orme's life and work every student of the French Renaissance must feel deeply indebted. From this I am glad



267.—INTERIOR OF CHAPEL.

to take those few suggestions of the original Anet which are necessary to the comprehension of the place to-day. When so much has disappeared, it is consoling that a piece of architecture so characteristic and so prominent as the entrance should remain. It is an archway, with an attic storey over it, and lodges upon either side, after a design which is unique of its kind in any country. In the disproportionate size of Cellini's nymph above the centre doorway I am inclined to see an instance of the imperious Diane's interference with the artist's own design. For every other detail is in harmony with the main lines of the whole, and it is possible that De l'Orme was suddenly handed the sculpture that had been made for Fontainebleau and made to insert it in his composition after the masonry had been completed. The winged figures of Fame in the spandrels of the arch that holds this figure have now vanished, together with the





268.—THE CHAPEL FACADE.



delicate bronze heads round the clock, the carved gargoyles of the upper terrace, the bronze bouquets above the side doors and many other details which may have all helped to improve the general effect. It must also be remembered that the wing visible on the left of the entrance and behind it was not so high in De l'Orme's original design, and that the trees nearer his archway on the right were not there when the full plan of his building was first carried out. But nothing can quite reconcile me to the presence of a statue which Benvenuto has twice carefully described as deliberately designed in correct proportions for an entirely different building in an entirely different situation. What De l'Orme could really do in the way of

delicate spacing when he had a fair chance is visible in the portal he designed for the central block at Anet, which may now be seen in the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, though the gable behind it makes it rather difficult to realise the full meaning of its designer, and the little statuette of Cupid in the arch of the second storey is a very poor substitute for the full-armed statue of her husband De Brézé which his widow set there first. But I would particularly draw attention to the exquisite treatment of the surroundings of this arch, its double Corinthian columns, its beautifully carved spandrels and the charming initials on each side of the top beneath the tiny cherub's head. The coat of arms, supported by two greyhounds, which crowned the composition, is no longer there. But the whole thing is a quite legitimate example of the beauty of completed Anet in its prime, and it is worth remembering as we pass through the gateway into what was once the Cour d'Honneur. On the right stands the chapel, unmistakable with the stone pyramids on each side of its colonnaded belfry. In the original plans of Anet, given by Du Cerceau, the entrance of this building is shown curiously masked by the eastern wing of the courtyard, which must have been lower at this side than on the other. Now the whole eastern wing has gone, and the chapel stands free, as I suspect it would always have done had not the Duchess interfered. As it is, the façade built by Auguste Caristie for M. le Comte de Caraman, proprietor of Anet in 1844, is, perhaps, the best thing that could have been done to save from ruin a most interesting piece of architecture, which has already lost much. Its plan is a circle of twenty-eight



269.—BAS-RELIEF BY GOUJON.

feet in diameter, with recesses fourteen feet wide and about seven feet deep. Above the elliptical arches of these recesses are the main entablature and a hemispherical dome, coffered diagonally in lines that are exactly reproduced in the multi-coloured marbles inlaid on the floor. The spandrels hold eight splendid female figures, probably the work of Jean Goujon, and very much like the magnificent winged Fames he was to carve soon afterwards for the Louvre. The beautiful four-winged angels preserved in this chapel are also bas-reliefs by Jean Goujon, which were rescued by M. Moreau, proprietor



of Anet in 1860, from the church at Dreux, whither they had been taken in about 1844, from the parish church of Anet; and I have little doubt that they were originally ordered by Duchess Diane for some part of her château.

The Funerary chapel, which she began in 1562 to hold her own tomb, quite different from De l'Orme's building I have just described, is situated on the west of the main buildings beyond the old line of the moat. It is of brick, faced with stone, and both in plan and detail it is more like the work of Bullant than of Diane's original architect, who left her when Catherine de' Medici set him to work upon the Tuileries after the death of Henry II. I may add here that Jean Goujon's fountain, called the Diane Chasseresse, which you may now see in the Louvre, was originally set in the space of garden immediately behind the present western wing, and that the fountain Mr. Evans has photographed for these pages was only discovered underground in 1844. It is without doubt one of the original decorations of these stately gardens, and has been rightly placed by their present owner at the garden end of the west wing. This wing, which contains the living-rooms of the château of to-day, has, of course, suffered many things since De l'Orme left it for the habitation of the Duchess, and its worst enemy was Louis Joseph, Duc de Vendôme, son of Mlle. de Mancini and Louis de Vendôme, who was the grandson of Gabrielle d'Estrées and Henry IV. Anxious in 1683 to make every preparation for a visit from his Royal patron, Louis XIV, the wicked Louis Joseph cut De l'Orme's design and details all to pieces, inserting mirrors where Goujon's bas-reliefs had ennobled the wall spaces, and laying on thick gilding where the delicate arabesques of the Renaissance had lent distinction to the mouldings and the roof. The Dauphin and his Court spent a few days at Anet in entertainment almost as vulgar as the decorations. Dangeau produced some verses nearly as bad as either :

Superbe Anet, ornement de la France,  
De nos Dauphins séjour jadis chéry  
Notre Louis, plus grand que notre Henry,  
Vient embellir ces lieux de sa présence,  
Redoublez donc votre magnificence.

The family of Brézé, which had held Anet since Charles VII gave it to Seneschal Peter in 1444, had kept it after the death of the Duchesse de Valentinois through her daughter Louise, wife of the Duc d'Aumale, whose son, Charles de Lorraine, was obliged to give it up, in exchange for an unpaid loan, to Marie de Luxembourg, Duchesse de Mercœur; and it was her daughter, Françoise, who brought it with the rest of her huge dowry to César de Vendôme, natural son of Henry IV and Gabrielle d'Estrées, whom we have met before at Chenonceaux. The widow of the Duke who did so much damage at the end of the seventeenth century left Anet to her mother, the Princesse de Condé, until it passed on to her sister, the Duchesse du Maine, in whose reign Voltaire was a visitor; and he left a few



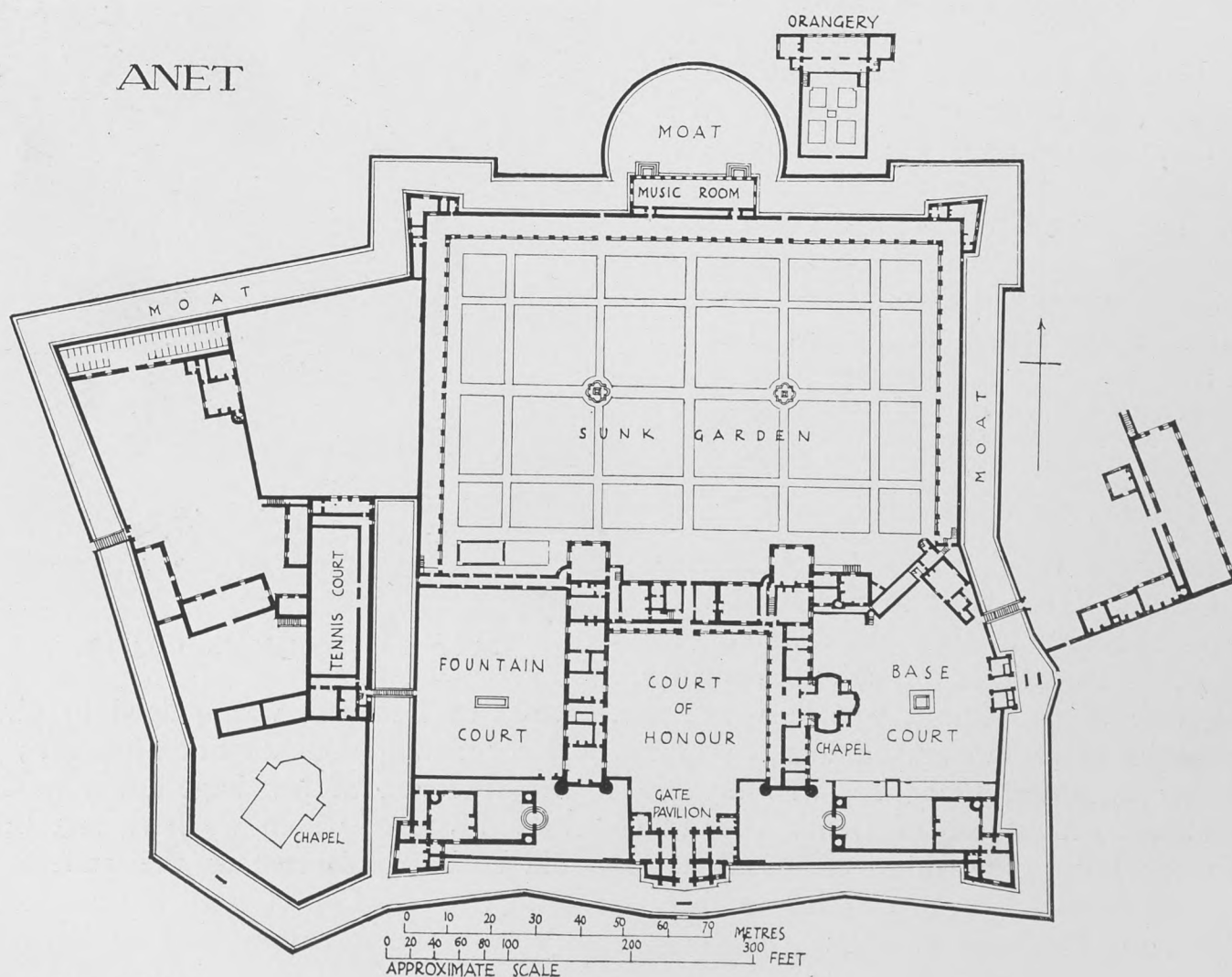
270.—BAS RELIEF IN CHAPEL.



verses which have at least a better flavour than the sententious platitudes of Dangeau. They run as follows, in the *Henriade* :

Il voit les murs d'Anet bâtis au bord de l'Eure ;  
L'Amour en ordonna la superbe structure,  
Par ses adroites mains avec art enlacés,  
Les chiffres de Diane y sont encor tracés.  
Sur sa tombe en passant les Plaisirs et les Grâces  
Répandirent les fleurs qui naissaient sur leurs traces.

The Prince de Dombes inherited Anet in due course in 1753, and was succeeded by his brother, who sold the estate to Louis XV for so large a sum that the King was glad enough to avoid payment by surrendering it to the heir, the Duc de Penthièvre, High Admiral of France, a distinguished nobleman who had fought well at Dettingen and Fontenoy, and was beloved by the whole countryside. His daughter married the Duc de Chartres, and became the mother of King Louis Philippe ; and he was almost the only châtelain of such high rank who was spared by the Revolution, which did not do so much damage to Anet as the calculated vandalism of the Vendômes had already effected in the stately home of Diane de Poitiers. But the estate was sold for two million two hundred thousand francs (nearly ninety thousand pounds) to a pair of "financial agents," who proceeded to get back as much of their capital as possible by scraping off the gilding ; and if it had not been for the efforts of the excellent Alexandre Lenoir, to whom the national art of France is so deeply indebted, no doubt more damage would have been done. But Lenoir's energy saved a good deal by the spirited method of bringing to Anet one of its most celebrated visitors, no less than Napoleon Bonaparte, First Consul, who had General Moreau with him, and rode over the battlefield of Ivry. One unfortunate result seemed at first likely to follow Lenoir's admirable rescue of Anet's best remaining treasures, for its next proprietor, one Demonti, evidently thought the rest was worth no better fate than being pulled down for the price its materials would fetch. But the inhabitants rose against such wanton destruction, and the place was resold to the family of Penthièvre-Orléans for a considerably reduced sum. After various other vicissitudes it passed to M. le Comte de Caraman, and in 1860 it became the property of M. Ferdinand Moreau, Deputy of the Seine, whose daughter married the present owner.



271.—PLAN.



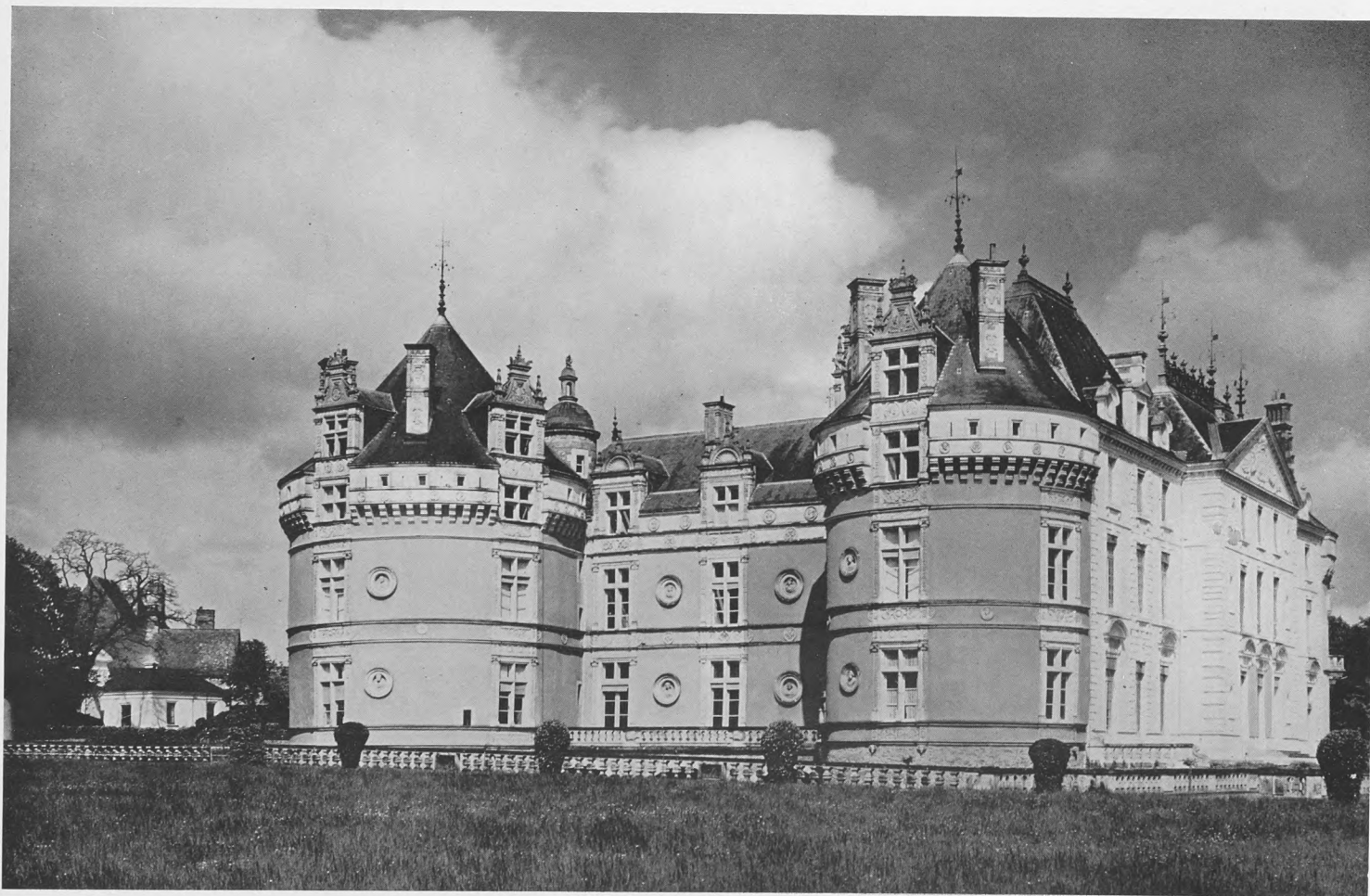
CHAPTER XVIII.

LE LUDE, SARTHE.\*

Il nous convient d'autant plus d'eriger le comté du Lude en duché-pairie de France, que cette terre, étant d'un grand revenu et l'une des plus nobles et des plus anciennes de notre royaume, est aussi l'une des plus capables de soutenir l'éclat et la splendeur de cette dignité.—Letters Patent of Louis XIV, July, 1675.

Moi je m'attens d'être gouverneur de Flandres et m'y ferai tout d'or.—Jehan Daillon to Philippe de Commynes, July, 1475.

THE two centuries which elapsed between 1475 and 1675 comprise that part of the history of Le Lude which is most important for the understanding of its architecture, and at the midmost point of time between them (1575) was built that great gateway of white stone striped with darkly rusticated bars, which rises between two towers as you pass along the railway line from La Flèche to Tours. It is the grand entry to the park, the gardens, moats and walls of the great castle on the banks of Loir at the end of the magnificent avenue which begins at Les Tourelles. But the long romance of this historic estate extends for three centuries before and three centuries after that massive entrance gate was built. If it was the wealth and influence amassed by Jehan Daillon during the lifetime of Commynes which made possible the peerage awarded by the Roi Soleil, it is no less true to say that the line of Le Lude's owners, represented at the present day by M. de Talhoüet-Roy, can be traced back in direct succession from the twentieth to the tenth century; and its outstanding interest



272.—SOUTH FACADE OF LE LUDE : VIEW FROM THE GRAND TERRACE.

\* The Property of M. René de Talhoüet-Roy.



undoubtedly is to be found in this long continuity of dignified habitation from the earliest Norman Dukes down to the Third Republic. With this, therefore, I propose to begin, though we may be tempted, here and there, to linger a little longer upon individual châtelains than a strict sense of proportion might dictate for sterner pages.

The first Seigneur du Lude recorded in the documents of the department is Isambart de Montreveaux. His daughter, Emmeline, married Raoul de Beaumont, Vicomte du Mans, and by this alliance was begun the custom according to which the title of the estate went to the younger sons of the Beaumont family till 1355. In that year it passed from them by the marriage of Agnès de Beaumont with Louis de Brienne, younger son of the King of Jerusalem and Emperor of Constantinople. Twenty-three years afterwards Marguerite de Poitiers, who had married Jean Vicomte de Beaumont-Brienne, sold Le Lude to Jean de Vendôme, the husband of Marie, a daughter of Robert of Orange, and a cousin of the great Constable Du Guesclin. If any woman might have seemed securely guarded against a *mésalliance* it was Marie, yet she chose for a second husband one Thomas Lemoyne, and with that fatal error the first real troubles of Le Lude began, for Jean Lemoyne, the son of too ambitious Thomas, was



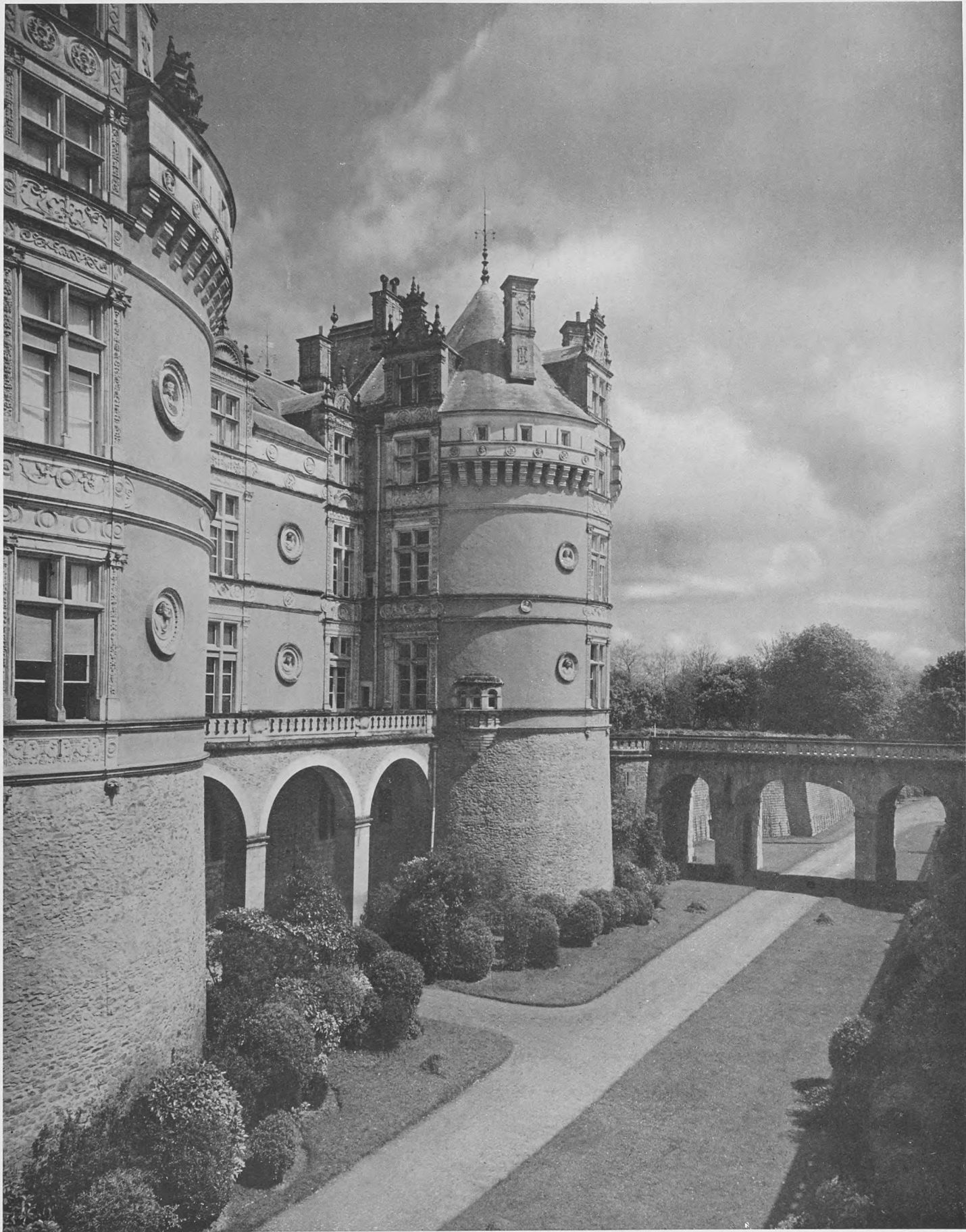
273.—ROOF OF THE SOUTH-EASTERN TOWER.

not powerful enough to keep that lordly citadel, and in 1419 the English took it. They held it with a garrison of one thousand two hundred men for eight years.

The first fort had been already built here when the Normans sailed up the Loir in the tenth century and burnt the village church; and the donjon set on the spur of high land above the river was held by Fulk I of Anjou, by Fulk Nerra, and after 1030 by Isambart, that first Seigneur du Lude already mentioned. The only relic of the newer castle, built a hundred metres further on, in 1300, is the underground hall beneath the parterres of the modern east façade. This is the fortress held by Guillaume de Méson for Louis de Brienne when the English tried three times to storm it, and at length took it for a short space until they were turned out again. After Agincourt their hold grew firmer, and the stubborn leader known to the French chroniclers as "Blanchburn" made good his stay until an attack was made upon him in 1427, which has become one of the most celebrated episodes in the history of the castle. Appropriately enough, one of the French leaders, a Beaumanoir, was a descendant of that Beaumont family whose younger sons had held Le Lude for two hundred years from the tenth



century. He was helped by the young Gilles de Laval, Chevalier de Rais (or Retz), who was to be Marshal of France only two years later, and already had given high promise of his brilliant military future. Few could have imagined that he was to die by the hands of the public



274.—THE GARDENS OF THE DRY FOSSE.

executioner, who strangled him after an old age of such revolting crime that it has remained legendary among the horrors even of that reckless and cruel generation. The third whose name stands highest in the memory of Le Lude as the gallant soldier who took the most



prominent part in the heroic fight that followed was Ambroise de Loré, who had helped to escort Joan of Arc from Charles VII's Court at Chinon, and then went on with de Retz and d'Alençon to march with her from Blois to the delivery of Orleans, where he fought beside La Hire against the English, and in 1436 was rewarded for his services by the title of Baron d'Ivry and the captaincy of the Prévôté of Paris.

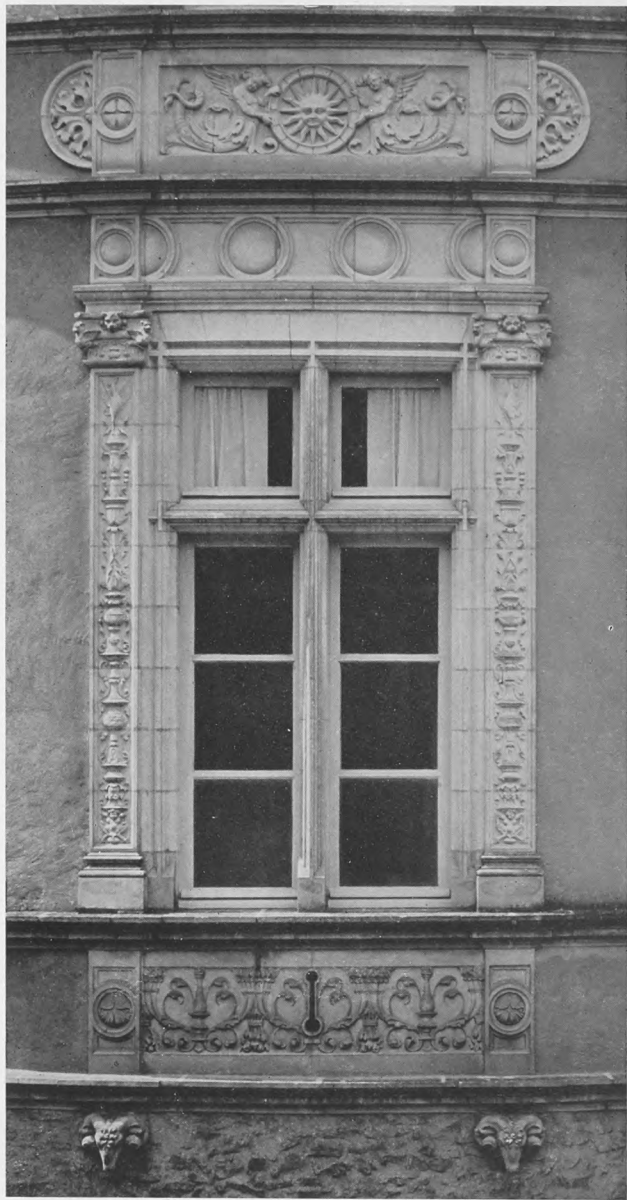
These were the three who started one dark night from the walls of Sablé (which held out for the Constable, the Comte de Richemonde), and led their men-at-arms straight over the bridge, through the town and across the first fosse of the castle, six feet deep by four yards wide. But Blackburn was not to be frightened out of the citadel, and against his constant sorties only the stubborn courage of de Loré kept the French lines steadfast after the

first fury of their onset had been spent. At last the moat was filled up with fascines, and the fire of such cannon as they had was concentrated on the main gate until a breach was made. Then, while Blackburn rushed his supports towards the weakened parts of his defence, a party of de Loré's men scaled the wall elsewhere with ladders, mounted into the fortress and flanked the English lines. In an hour or two the foreign invaders had been overwhelmed, and Le Lude was French again.

Marie d'Orange, so sadly a Lemoyne, had had a son by her first husband, Jean de Vendôme, who inherited a much battered fortress and greatly diminished estates. But it was shortly to pass into stronger hands. Marie's cousin, as we have seen, was the famous Bertrand Du Guesclin, and his sister married Jehan (1) Daillon of Poitou, whose son, Gilles Daillon, was born in 1376. The first wife of Gilles, in 1408, was Jeanne de l'Espine, by whom he had a son, Jehan (2) Daillon; but with his second wife, Marguerite de Montberon (1440), he began, through the Vendôme family, that connection between the Daillons and Le Lude which was to last so long. It was still further strengthened by the marriage of Jehan (2) Daillon with Renée de Fontaines (1443), the heiress of Vendôme.

Jehan (2) Daillon was born at Bourges in 1423, in the same year as the Dauphin who was to be Louis XI, and the Vendôme marriage enabled him to consolidate once more the seigneurie of Le Lude by buying back for six thousand crowns all the lands which had been sold off during the disastrous interlude of the Lemoyne to a Breton capitalist; and his wealth was still further

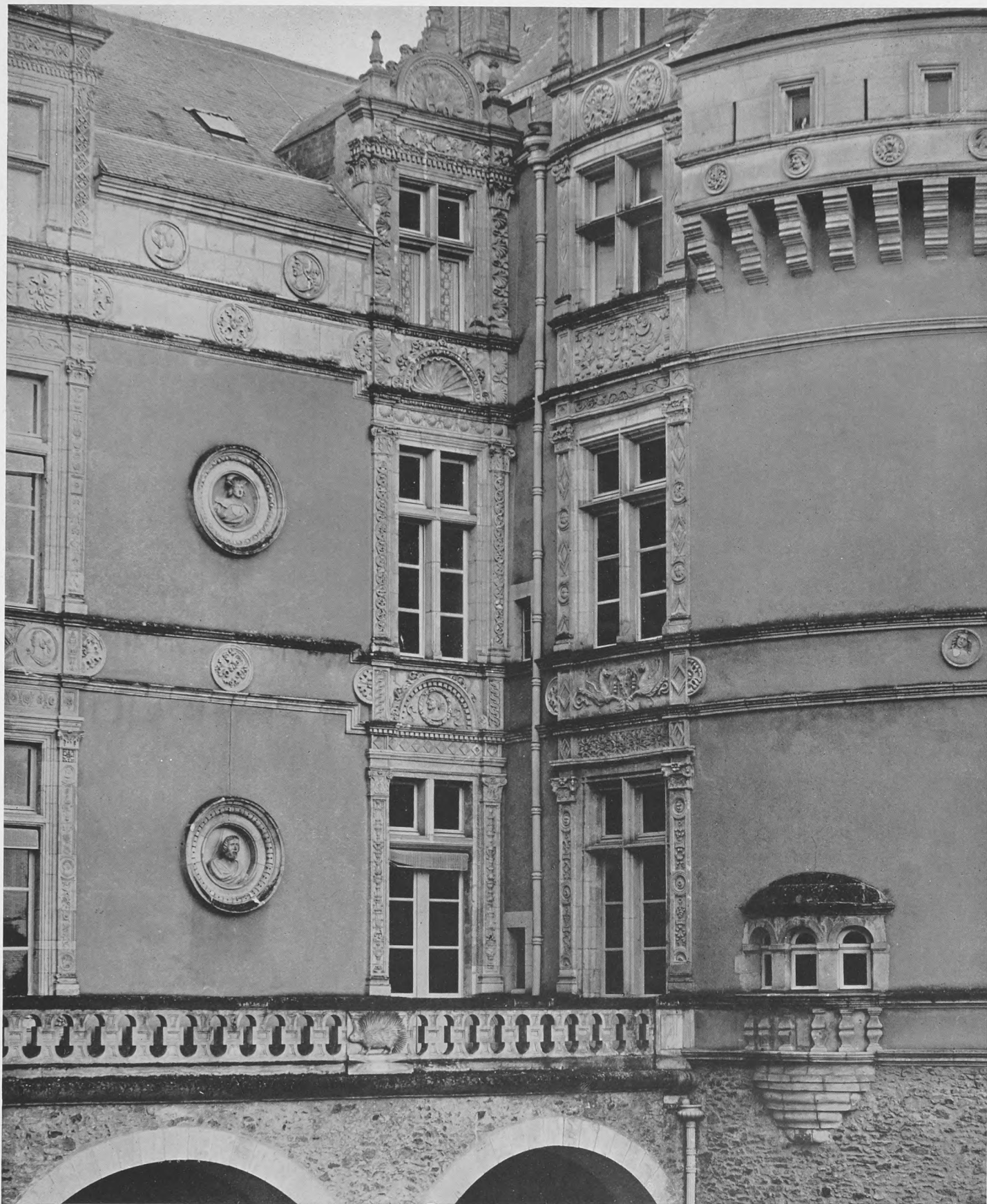
increased by the dowry of his second wife (1459), Marie de Laval. The favour of the Dauphin had given welcome proof of its apparent solidity when he was only four-and-twenty, by the appointment to the lucrative post of Chamberlain to His Royal Highness; and this would, no doubt, have led to greater things, for there are many traces of the friendship between the two young men. In 1442, for instance, we find a receipt given to Jehan by Louis for certain pieces of tapestry captured when d'Armagnac was made prisoner at L'Isle Jourdain, and sent (as we heard at Loches) to Agnes Sorel. But there was a sudden break. In 1455 Jehan had left the Dauphin's party, and was fighting for Charles VII. When Louis in his turn came to the throne six years later, he was characteristically swift in vengeance; and after Montlhéry in 1465 Jehan was obliged to take refuge in a cavern in the recesses of the forest of Le Lude. Old associations, however, must have proved stronger at last than recent resentment in the mind



275.—RENAISSANCE WINDOW.



of Louis, for by 1468 we find Jehan restored to his post in the King's Guards, with the office of Inspector of Infantry and his old charge of Chamberlain to the Dauphin, afterwards Charles VIII. Dignities and emoluments of many kinds followed fast on this advancement. Jehan became Governor of Alençon, Dauphiné and Domfront ; and his campaigns in Roussillon



276.—DETAILS OF RENAISSANCE CARVING ON THE SOUTH FACADE.

in 1475 attracted the deserved attention of contemporary chroniclers. "Il était homme très plaisant," says Commines of him at this time ; "il aimait son profit particulier." His bold profession of faith to the historian has been placed at the head of this essay ; and whatever he did for the King in the Flanders campaigns, he certainly did not forget to "make gold" for



himself. His riches were increased by confiscations from the Prince of Orange, and by the dowries of his wives, as well as by his service with Louis, who was quite shrewd enough to see through him and used laughingly to call him "mon maître des habiletés." In 1482 he died, an immensely wealthy man, twenty-five years after Le Lude had come into

his possession; and by his son, Jacques, a great portion of that wealth was spent in beginning the château we can see to-day.

Jehan had himself made a good beginning, for soon after 1468 he had called in Jean Gendrot, the *maître des œuvres* to no less a man than King René of Anjou, who came to visit the three-sided feudal fortress, with its seven towers, its huge moats, its postern at the south-west angle and its drawbridge over the southern fosse, which held the ground behind the still more ancient donjon site upon the éperon above the river's bank. It was close to this citadel that was built the Maison des Architectes for Jean Gendrot, which still exists.

The centre of activity had been fairly started. Jehan's son, Jacques de Daillon, Baron du Lude and Seneschal of Anjou, born in 1462, went steadily on with the work. His younger brother, François, was a famous fighter at St. Aubin du Cormier, at Formosa and at Ravenna, where he was killed in 1512, after showing courage which placed his memory, says Brantôme, on a level with that of the immortal Bayard. Jacques himself, who married Madeline d'Illiers in 1491, learnt his arms under that great soldier, the Constable Bourbon, and proved his worth by holding Fontarabia against the whole strength of Spain. Of that town and of La Rochelle he was made Governor. Under Louis XII and Francis I he enjoyed the offices of Councillor

and Chamberlain, and began that tradition of high and well-paid service which lasted for at least



277.—TRIPLE ARCADE OF THE GRAND STAIRCASE.

two centuries in his family. Though a bonfire was fed with the archives of Le Lude in 1793, some one hundred and sixty letters still exist in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris; and the first of them I may reproduce here as an example of the epistolary diplomacy of Francis I when it was advisable to arrange a marriage. "Mons. du Lude," writes the King,

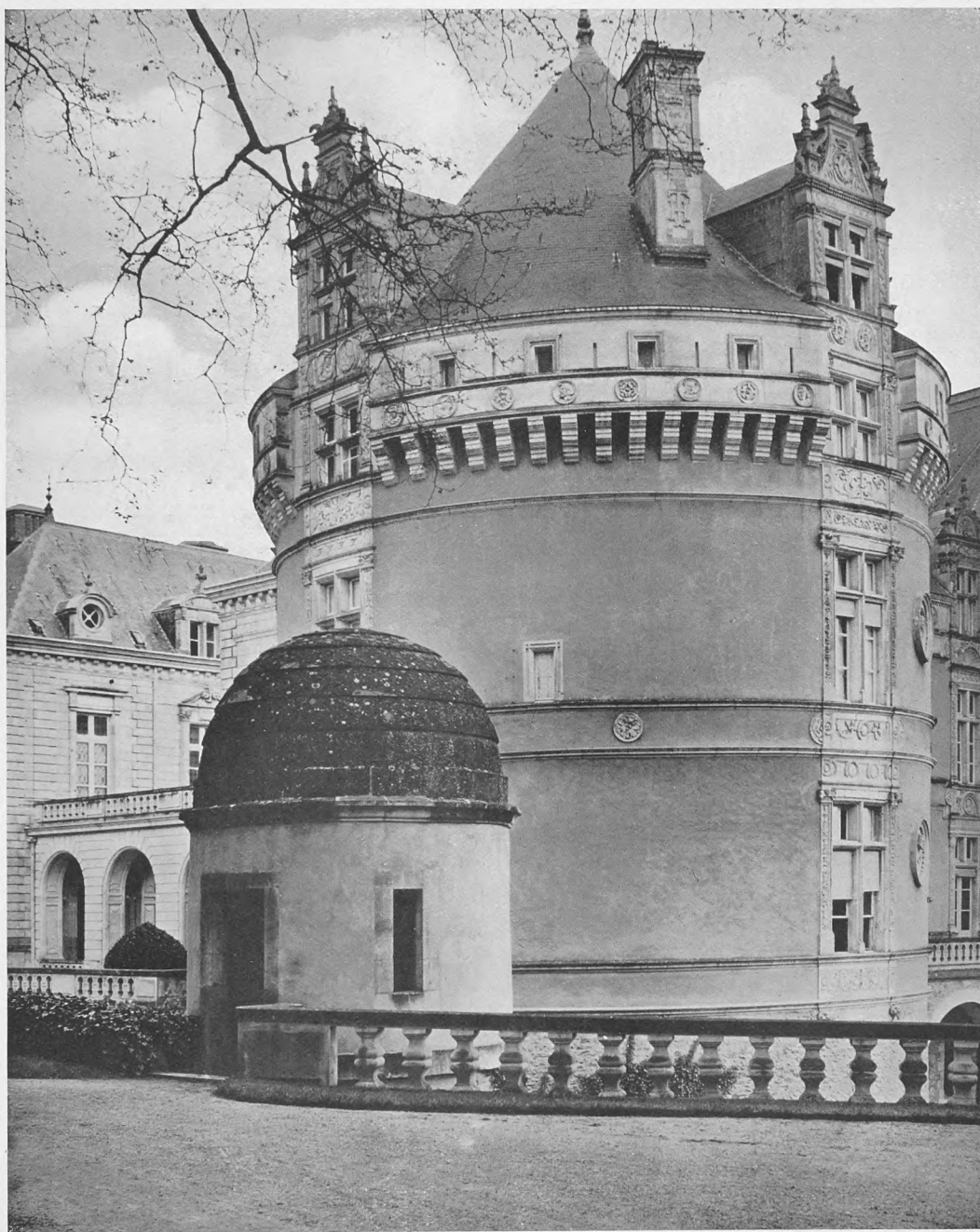
sy je ne pansoys être plus que resonable le propos que je vous escrys, je ne le vous voudrays consayller ne pryer, mes le pansant tel je vous avyse quan le fesan ferez gran plesyr à  
FRANCOYS.

Besides this there are one or more letters from Henry II, Charles IX (no less than eight), Catherine de' Medici, Henry III, Henry IV and Louis XIII, all of which may be taken to prove that the Seigneurs du Lude never looked back for at least one hundred years.

In the Renaissance feeling of the south façade Palustre recognises the influences of the Jacques de Daillon who was badly wounded at Pavia, and died in 1533 at Illiers. His son, Jean, became Comte du Lude in 1545, and married Anne de Batarnay. The next heir, Guy, a godson of Henry II, married Jacqueline de la Fayette, held Poitiers against the Huguenots and died in 1585, after he had built the big gates in the park which I described at the beginning of this chapter. François, third Comte du Lude, Marquis d'Illiers and Hereditary Seneschal of Anjou, married Françoise de Schomberg, and fought through the wars of Henry III, Henry IV and Louis XIII, to whose brother, Gaston of Orleans, he was for some time the tutor and



guardian. In 1598 he was honoured by a visit from Henry IV, who was on his way from Chartres to Brittany, and the room where slept the *vert galant* is still shown on the first floor of the South Tower. In the same apartment reposed Louis XIII (then a year younger than the heir, Timoléon) when travelling from Angers to visit Marie de' Medici at Chenonceaux in 1619. That same year François was buried with his fathers, and Timoléon reigned in his stead—Timoléon, who laid out the parterre of Le Lude over the old underground casemates of the éperon, who built the two hundred and fifty yards of noble balustrade along the wall upholding the great terrace, who set up in the gardens the marble group of Hercules and Antæus by Mongendre of Le Mans, and who left his initials, with those of his wife, Marie Feydeau, on the sundial of 1649. Two years later another Daillon began a brilliant career, at the age of twenty-four, as Colonel of the King's Fusiliers and Governor of Versailles. By 1675 he had attained the dignities of Duke and Peer, as may be read in the letters patent of Louis XIV already quoted. But life at the Court, which permitted him no happiness away from it, bestowed too little of its favours on the nobleman who had been given the high office of Grand Maître d'Artillerie de France, but bitterly regretted to the end of his life the refusal of a Marshal's baton. He first married Renée-Eléonore de Bouillé, whose eccentricities may possibly explain the long absence of her titular lord and master from Le Lude, where she hunted all day long in masculine attire. The memory of the cruel, capricious, dry-hearted amazon, followed by the black greyhound given her by Louis XIV, has never faded in the district, and the phantom of a demon-huntress is still said to haunt the park. The only time she came to Paris was to say good-bye to her husband on his way to the wars in April, 1672, and Mme. de Sévigné notes with a chuckle what a shockingly bad hat of broken grey velvet she was wearing. But any suspicions that Henri de Daillon consoled himself for so unattractive a consort with the charms of the lively letter-writer are absolutely unfounded. The scandal-loving Bussy-Rabutin has not a syllable to say about it; and whatever may have been the admiration felt by the new Peer, it was certainly not reciprocated by Mme. de Sévigné, as may be easily seen from the terms of her letter of October 4th, after his death, in 1685. Before then, the amazon had hunted her last; and Henri's



278.—THE SOUTH-WESTERN TOWER AND HEAD OF THE TURRET STAIR.



second wife was Marguerite-Louise-Suzanne de Béthune, daughter of Sully and widow of the Comte de Guiche, who became lady-in-waiting to the Duchess of Burgundy on losing her second husband.

He was the last of the Daillons, if we except one Jacques, a Protestant minister, who died at the age of eighty in London; and most of the work upon Le Lude was stopped at his death. He was succeeded by his elder sister's daughter, who married Antoine de Roquelaure, Marquis de Biran. Their son, who took the title of Comte du Lude, became Commander-in-Chief of the forces in Languedoc and a Marshal of France. He died in 1758, and his daughter, Françoise (who had married Louis de Bretagne, duc de Rohan-Chabot, in 1708), left Le Lude to her son, the Prince de Léon, who sold it in 1751 to Joseph-Julien Duvelaër, of the French East India Company. This gentleman, whose career is somewhat mysterious, had married a Chinese, and was a well-known correspondent of Dupleix, with several friends in England, whom he visited in 1764. He successfully resisted a prosecution for debt, and died in 1765, leaving Le Lude to his niece, Françoise-Joséphine, whose father was an Englishman. She married Etienne Baude, Marquis de Vieuville, and restored the castle from the designs of Barré, who pulled down the old western façade at the back, between the towers, in order to establish a main entrance over a bridge across the fosse. He also built the threefold arcade, giving an open means of access to the first floor of each wing.

The new building begun in 1787, in a mixture of the styles of Louis XIV and Louis XVI, proved quite unsuitable to the early Renaissance of Francis I close by it. But the "reparations" were not ended yet. The Marquise de Vieuville had a daughter, Elizabeth Françoise, who was a Maid of Honour to the Empress Joséphine, and brought her heritage of Le Lude to her husband, Louis Céleste Frédéric de Bonamour, Marquis de Talhoüet, a member of that famous Breton family who bear pineapples on their escutcheon. Their son, Auguste Frédéric, fought for Napoleon at Moscow and commanded the Grenadier Guards at the Restoration, when he was made a General and married Alexandrine, daughter of M. Roy, the famous Minister of Finance, rising himself to the rank of Marshal in 1816 and Peer in 1819. His daughter married the Duc d'Uzès. His son, Auguste, born in 1819, became Marquis de Talhoüet-Roy in 1842, and in 1847 married Léonie Marie Sidonie Honnorez, daughter of the Comtesse de Rigny. In 1851 his mother gave him Le Lude, where he at once began more restorations, and discovered some beautiful and valuable old Italian frescoes, representing Biblical subjects and some incidents in the life of Jehan (2) Daillon, on the walls of the oratory, which is close to the library in the Renaissance wing. He also rebuilt the western Tour du Diable, making a *salle des gardes* and a great staircase opening into the vestibule.

By the help of the illustrations you may now begin to realise something not only of what Le Lude grew from, but of what it can show to-day, with its terrace and park to the south, the Fields of Malidor across the Loir to the east, the village to the west and the road to the river on the north. Four towers with deeply cut machicolations guard its four corners and the western side of the great quadrilateral opens to the setting sun. On the north façade is the old work of the reign of Louis XII, with the canopied equestrian statue of Jehan (2) Daillon above its pointed arches. On the south, the loveliest of all, is the Renaissance wing, with its medallions, its exquisite bands of carving, its beautiful windows. The more modern mixture on the east is sadly out of harmony with the rest. But the place is gathered up into a dignified and spacious whole by its magnificent park of nearly a hundred kilometres in circumference. Even the east façade is redeemed from ugliness by the Parterre de l'Eperon. Before the southern wing stretches the Grand Terrace across the moat, with gardens in the dry fosse, and the Lower Parterre along the river bank, a magnificent example of the type of ornamental garden carried out by Barillet Deschamps in the Park Monceau. It is very beautifully designed and about two hundred metres long, between the scarped wall and balustrades of the Grand Terrace and the waters of the Loir. Beyond it lies a vista of open landscape. Such is the splendid setting of one of the greatest houses of France which can count its owners uninterruptedly for a thousand years. Its buttressed walls and terraces seem built to uphold the weight of all those centuries of splendour and tradition.



CHAPTER XIX.

CHANTILLY, OISE.\*

**A**FTER over six hundred years of private ownership, varied by a short sequestration to the Crown, Chantilly has become the property of the great literary association which guards the art treasures collected by the late Duc d'Aumale in what is now the Musée Condé. The first château was built about 1250 by Jean le Bouteiller, the last by Henri d'Orleans in 1876. Between these dates are many memories, and a few tragedies that will never be forgotten while the ghost of poor Louise de Budos still hovers above the waters of the moat. Louise de Clermont and the wife of the great Condé are two other instances of Chantilly's unhappy châtelaines. The men were sometimes unlucky too. The young Montmorency died upon the scaffold after his sister had become the mother of the conqueror of Rocroy. The Duc d'Enghien was shot in cold blood by Napoleon's orders. Looking at Chantilly's scholarly galleries and peaceful waters now, you would never imagine that it had been the home of so many hapless ladies and unquiet soldiers in the years of its varied and historic past.

The oldest record of the estate I can find is the will of Jean le Bouteiller, Seigneur de Chantilly, who died in 1286, leaving provision for the foundation of a chapel in which Masses were to be said in his memory. The body of his son William was buried in it, and remained there till 1718, when it was placed in the parish church, and in the next century the chapel, originally on the site of the present spiral staircase, was removed. In 1386, nearly thirty years after the rebels of the Jacquerie had almost destroyed the first château, it was rebuilt by Pierre d'Orgemont, Chancellor of Charles V, and the foundations of his round towers still remain. He gave the Cordeliers of Senlis one hundred gold crowns to celebrate Mass in the chapel of Chantilly, and from Peter de Luna, acknowledged at Avignon as Pope Benedict XIII, he received a bull granting it the revenues of the chapel of Chaversy in addition. His direct descendant, Marguerite d'Orgemont, married Jean II de Montmorency, and her brother gave her son William (who married Anne Pot) the domain of Chantilly, in which Anne de Montmorency, the future Constable of France, was born in 1492.

After the death of his father, in 1531, the Constable built no less than seven chapels on the estate (of which three still remain) in memory of the seven churches he had visited in Rome. But the indulgences granted by Pope Paul III, which conferred the same benefits on visitors to these chapels as was customary to those who made a pilgrimage to Rome itself, led to a continual afflux of tourists, which began seriously to annoy both the Constable and his wife, Madeleine de Savoie. They therefore obtained a further Papal indulgence, announcing that a visit to those chapels situated outside the home park would be sufficient to secure the pilgrim the benefits he desired, without its being necessary for the château and its immediate surroundings to be thronged by strangers, who might very possibly bring infection with them. The chapel of St. Paul still stands behind the Château d'Enghien. The chapel of Sainte Croix is near the modern racecourse. The chapel of St. Pierre is in a house in Vineuil. But by far the finest masonry of the great Constable's residence at Chantilly is the oldest part of the present château, the low but exquisitely proportioned building which looks over the moat to the south-west, and forms the subject of my best illustration. The plan of Chantilly as you may visit it to-day is simple. Imagine it to be a right-angled triangle, with the entrance placed in the middle of one side; on the right is the right angle, and on the left

\* The Property of the Institut de France.



is one of the acute angles, the other acute angle being of slightly irregular formation. Most of this has been restored by its late owner, the Duc d'Aumale. From the acute angle on the left of the entrance to half way up the hypotenuse, and parallel with it, is the sixteenth century building erected for Anne the Constable by Jean Bullant, one of the architects of Ecoeu. This is not the only link between Ecoeu and Chantilly, for it was from Ecoeu that Alexandre Lenoir saved the altar of Chantilly, and it was for Ecoeu that the *grisailles*, now near that altar, were originally painted by Jean le Pot of Beauvais.

Bullant and De l'Orme were the first French architects to study their art in Rome instead of in Milan; and, as may be seen by this exquisite work at Chantilly, Bullant possessed exceptional power and an originality which give the curiously modern effect to his "frontispieces" both here and at Ecoeu. Apart from two short technical treatises published in 1561 and 1564, little was known in England of Jean Bullant till the brilliant essays of



279.—ENTRANCE TO THE CHATEAU.

Professor Reginald Blomfield revealed his value; but the few works of his remaining show the best of the French architects of the sixteenth century, for almost alone among his contemporaries he foresaw those ultimate æsthetic possibilities in classical architecture which were only realised fifty years after De l'Orme had died. Such experiments in abstract form composition as this Chantilly façade left a permanent influence on French design and led up to the great classical work of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in France; and in this the instinct of his successors was justified, for they recognised in Jean Bullant a greater artist than either Lescot or De l'Orme.

So much it seemed necessary to say of a portion of Chantilly which is often neglected by the casual tourist who inspects the modern and flamboyant apartments added some forty years ago by the Duc d'Aumale's architect, or wanders through the huge gardens created by Le Nôtre



at the bidding of the Grand Condé, but forgets to appreciate the more modest and beautiful building rising from the moat where it was first set by a great soldier in the home that was to shelter so many celebrated soldiers after him. The Constable, Anne de Montmorency, is chiefly remembered in history for the ruthless way in which he desolated Provence in 1536, in order to stop the invading army of the Emperor Charles V from sheer want of provisions or shelter. After laying waste the Valley of the Rhone, he waited at Avignon while the angry Provençal guerillas chased the invaders back across the Pyrenees. When Henry II succeeded Francis I, the Constable found himself sharing the highest dignities in the kingdom with Marshal Saint-André and the Guises. His friend, Diane de Poitiers, was at the height of her power, and after the abdication of the Emperor he was chosen to lead the French attack against the Netherlands, where it was necessary to weaken Philip II.

In August, 1557, Coligny and seven hundred men were holding Saint-Quentin, which was besieged by Philibert-Emmanuel and seven thousand English. Montmorency, hurrying up reinforcements, was attacked, crushed and taken prisoner, with the Duc de Montpensier, Saint-André and the Duc de Longueville. Among his ten thousand dead and wounded were the Duc d'Enghien and the Vicomte de Turenne. But Coligny held on to starving Saint-Quentin for another seventeen days, and the Spaniards won little more by their



280.—GATE OF THE DUC D'AUMALE'S CHATEAU.

hard-bought victory. Calais was retaken from the English in the next year. After the peace of 1559, for the terms of which Montmorency has sometimes been severely blamed, he returned to Chantilly. With the Guises, the Trémouilles, the Châtillons, he was at the head of the great barons of France. Antoine de Bourbon-Navarre, the last of the old feudal chiefs, alone stood above them. It was his brother Louis, the first Prince of Condé (killed at Jarnac in 1569), whose descendants were to hold Chantilly after the Montmorencys left it. One of the older residents in the sixteenth century château I must say more about,



for M. Gustave Macon has recovered from the archives of Chantilly many most interesting documents concerning that period which are very little known. Francis, eldest son of the Constable Anne, died in 1579, leaving no child by his wife, Diane de France, natural daughter of Henry II; so Chantilly went to his brother Henry, in whose absence the two widow ladies, Mme. Diane, now entitled Duchesse d'Angoulême, and Mme. Madeleine, her stepmother, took care of Chantilly, which had to be garrisoned in 1589, after the murder of the Duc de Guise at Blois threw France into confusion. Curiously enough, it was a Duc d'Aumale who then inflicted its only siege upon the Chantilly which another prince of the same name was to rebuild in the nineteenth century. But La Noue and Longueville relieved the château, and the ladies soon repaired the breaches in its curtain-walls, which defended a residence very different from that you see to-day. In 1594 Henry de Montmorency was rewarded for his brilliant services in Languedoc, and, after twenty years' absence from home, returned as the second Constable of France to own Chantilly. His first wife, Antoinette de la Marck, daughter of the Duc de Bouillon, was dead. Both her sons were dead also. One daughter, Margaret, had married the Duc de Ventadour; the elder, Charlotte, was the wife of Charles de Valois, natural son of Charles IX. The Constable felt lonely, though he was not a man who lived without



281.—THE CHAPEL AND FACADE.

distractions. In 1593 he married Louise de Budos, a pretty widow of nineteen. Soon after his return to Chantilly their son Henry was born, and Henri Quatre became his godfather. From that time onwards the Constable became *mon compère* to the *Vert Galant*, and the King looked on Chantilly as another home. Neither of them, fortunately, foresaw the terrible end of their godchild on the scaffold only thirty-four years afterwards.

Montmorency was not often able to visit Chantilly, where his wife and heir, his two natural sons, Jules and Esplandian, with their mother, Mme. de Richery of Avignon, lived all together, apparently in perfect harmony, with an occasional change to the Château of Mello, from which fruit and vegetables were sometimes sent across to Chantilly. Quite suddenly, in September, 1598, came the news to the Constable that his wife was dead, "in the flower of her beauty." Pierre de l'Estoile did not shrink from hinting at the legends of diabolical intervention which at once became current in Paris, and are repeated a century afterwards even by Saint Simon. There was as little truth in them as in the sinister accusations of the Constable which accompanied them. Her ghost is said to have haunted the castle down to the days of the great Condé. These little scandals received some support from the fact that, not long after his second wife's death, Montmorency was said to be about to take her aunt (another young widow) for his third.





282.—THE CHAPEL FROM THE MOAT.

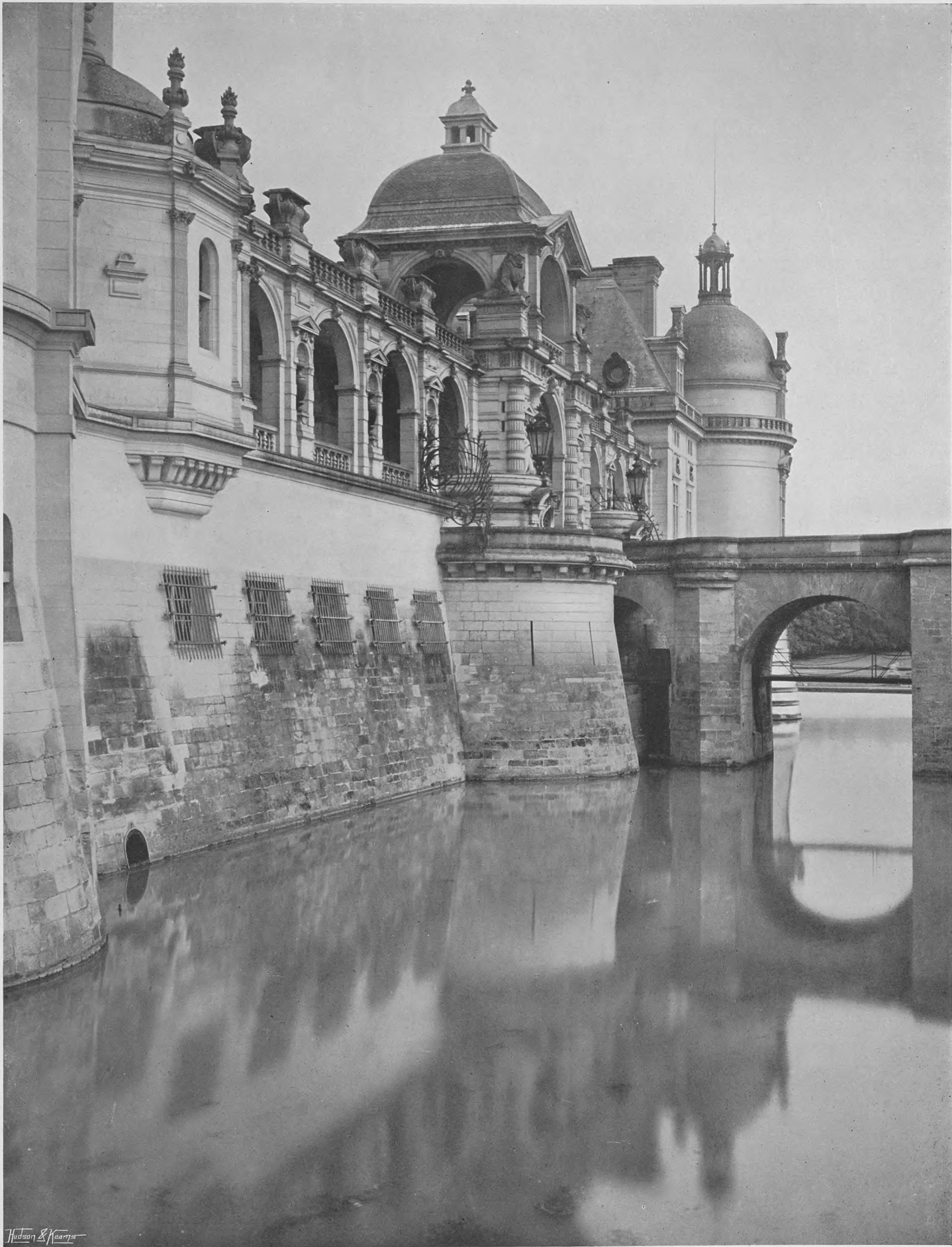


Laurence de Clermont, then twenty-seven years of age, had married at eighteen the Comte de Dizimieu, who died soon afterwards, and later on she had become the natural companion of her niece, the Duchess of Chantilly. She was not beautiful; but the propinquity of an uxorious old gentleman of sixty-five, with a great reputation and an assured position, is quite sufficient explanation for the marriage, which was privately celebrated between them in the Château of Mello in September, 1599. The only congratulations the Constable received were from Mme. de Richery. The Pope himself remained to be placated, and society awaited the verdict of the Vatican, for which Jean des Porcellets (Lord of Maillane and cousin of the second Duchess) most obligingly offered to journey to Rome. But a sudden change occurred in the Constable's affections. What was the key to the mystery we shall never know, but the result was most unhappy to Mme. Laurence. In April, 1601, she was sent into Languedoc; in June her marriage was publicly celebrated at Beaucaire. The next day she was formally forbidden ever to return to Chantilly, and was sent first to L'Isle Adam and then to the Château of Offémont, which is on the borders of the forest of Laigle, to the north-east of Compiègne. After a few months of absolute misery she was given a small independent revenue; but her loneliness—her imprisonment it might almost be called—continued. A few pathetic letters of hers remain. In 1608 she wrote to congratulate the Constable on the marriage of his son, and when the boy passed by Ecoeuven she came to see him. Next year she made a furtive visit to Chantilly, "bringing her dinner with her." She lived forty years longer than the Constable, and the tragedy ended with her death at the age of eighty-three, when everyone had forgotten her existence.

In 1599 the Constable called in Pierre Biard, an artist of versatile and excellent talents, and not unworthy of a share in the work begun by Pierre Chambiges in 1528 and carried on by Jean Bullant. It was this Biard who copied the *Captives* of Michael Angelo at Ecoeuven, now in the Louvre, and copied again by the Duc d'Aumale's orders for the entrance to nineteenth century Chantilly; and he also made an equestrian statue of the Constable Henry, which was erected in 1612, and a fine engraving was made of it by Picart. There is some indication in Biard's letters that the horse was an original Italian work bought for Ecoeuven, with the Michael Angelo carvings, by the Constable, to which the French artist fitted Montmorency's statue, just as Richelieu ordered the younger Biard to fit the figure of Louis XIII upon a horse by Daniel de Volterra. In any case it was melted down in 1793, and the statue now at Chantilly in its place is a magnificent representation of the old Constable Anne, by Paul Dubois, set up by the Duc d'Aumale. There are unequivocal signs of shortness of ready money at this period at Chantilly. But the Constable managed to do all he wanted, even to the extent of building a monastery in 1601; and his two children, Henry and Charlotte Marguerite, were most carefully educated by his chaplain, Nicolle Boulenger. In that year they would be six and seven respectively. Henry IV saw them both as he passed through the great park of Chantilly that August. The boy showed great charm already, and all the promise of high spirit that led him into fatal conflict with Richelieu later on, and to the scaffold at Toulouse. The girl was pretty and engaging. She was to trouble the susceptible heart of Henry IV to some purpose, eight years later, and she eventually became the wife of the Prince de Condé. It was to her that Chantilly was restored by Anne of Austria after the other possessions of the unhappy young Montmorency had been forfeited to the Crown at his execution in 1632.

The Montmorency children had a pleasant time of it, as they grew up, in the early years of the seventeenth century, amid these beautiful surroundings. Some charming letters still exist describing their greeting of their little nephew, Louis de Valois, who came from Paris by way of Ecoeuven and the forest of La Morlange. Little Charlotte reminds her father to be sure and "bring her muff, as it is cold at Chantilly in November." Henry, on the other hand, reports that having now taken to breeches he disdains the services of "the woman who had used to do his hair." A year afterwards Lord Herbert of Cherbury passed several days here on a visit from Mello, where he was staying, and thoroughly enjoying the fifty horses stabled there under the care of M. d'Isancourt, "as good a riding-master as Pluvinel himself." He speaks of the splendid furniture and statuary and pictures at Chantilly, of the carp and trout in the moats, of the game in the enormous forests round it, of the visits of the Emperor, of th-





283.—THE BRIDGE OVER THE MOAT.



fondness Henri Quatre so pointedly displayed for the estate, until the shrewd old Constable replied: "My house, Sire, is yours; but I will beg the honour of being your caretaker."

Henry IV was never tired of examining the livestock at Chantilly, its cows and goats and sheep; its dogs and horses; the fish and swans of its lakes and waters; the tame hind that wandered near the gardens; the turkeys in the farmyard; and the peacocks that sunned themselves upon its spacious walls. Fortune was indeed smiling on the Constable. Some of his vanished pictures have been recorded, especially a set he ordered through his steward, Girard du Thillay, from the artist Guillaume Heaulmé, of the eight best horses in his stables. He would be astonished if he could see the racing at Chantilly now. There were portraits by Benjamin Foullon, too, and carvings by Pierre Biard. There was also a fine tennis court, in which the "Vert Galant" played many a good game, and terraces of muscat grape vines and lines of peach trees, with a lovely cherry orchard behind one of the chapels. When the King thought of anything new he promptly ordered it to be done, and the Duke cheerfully paid the bill. For the children, still too young to get the best out of the hounds and falcons in which the King chiefly delighted, balls and mallets were ordered for the game of "paillemail." When the King wanted luncheon they gave him the home vintages from Montmorency or Mello; a dozen of "hypocras" is ordered up from Artand, "the apothecary"; bakers, shoeing smiths, silversmiths and provision dealers are hurried to the castle from all the country round. At last came the great day when the Constable ordered the children to come up to Fontainebleau. They travelled in state, with a tutor, a steward, a master of the horse, two ladies-in-waiting, a cook, a fruiterer and pastrymaker, a butler, two *valets de chambre*, a lackey and "the donkey of the Chantilly ironmonger, which carried food for them." By way of Ecouen, Paris, Villeneuve St. Georges and Melun the little cavalcade won safely to Fontainebleau, where they were thoroughly spoilt by the whole Court, and came home again in a fortnight.

The winter of 1607 was bitterly cold, and the boy's tutor had to write and reassure his father that sufficient care was being taken to keep him warm. "There is a good fire in his room; the windows are pasted up with paper, and have tapestry spread before them; the bed is warmed and furnished with double curtains, and Monsieur sleeps in his fur cloak beneath three quilts." That should have been sufficient. At any rate, the boy took no harm either from the cold weather or from his tutor's remedies; and in 1608 Henri Quatre suggested that he would make an excellent husband (they married young in those days) for Mlle. de Vendôme, daughter of Gabrielle d'Estrées. Montmorency was not as anxious for the match as his royal *compère* seemed to be, and his brother, Damville, Admiral of France, and husband of a daughter of the house of Cossé, appreciated the suggestion even less. His neighbour, Madame de Chemillé, châtelaine of Beaupréau (in the Maine-et-Loire), had a daughter of thirteen, whose rent-roll offered substantial advantages in addition to honourable birth. Between them all, the marriage with the heiress was hurried on, and the King showed visible signs of temper, immediately betrothing his natural daughter to the son of Madame de Longueville. But the little breeze soon blew over. It was not the visit of young Montmorency himself to St. Germain which brought the change, though he was made much of by Bouillon, Sully and the rest. It was a far more romantic reason. The gallant King had fallen desperately in love with the boy's little sister Charlotte, whose wit and beauty had developed at Court under the care of her aunt, the Duchesse d'Angoulême, and who was just reaching her fifteenth year.

Henri Quatre had no mind to be beaten in the game again. He called up Bassompierre, to whom the girl was already engaged, explained the state of his own affections and announced his firm intention of marrying her "to my nephew the Prince of Condé, so that she will be in the family." His notion was to give Condé one hundred thousand francs a year, "so that he may hunt, which he likes much better than women," and to pursue his own purposes with the lovely bride.

Henry II of Condé was grandson of Louis de Condé (who was killed at Jarnac), the brother of Antoine de Bourbon, King of Navarre. He was a poor orphan and he took his orders from Henry IV without suspecting anything. Equally innocent, or, at any rate, desirous of appearing so, the Constable Montmorency welcomed a match with a Prince of the Blood. It also



promised an easy reconciliation with his royal master. He went up to the Court, and was affectionately welcomed. The marriage contract was signed in March, 1609. Three hundred thousand livres had to be got together for the dowry. By the end of the next month enough Montmorency land was sold or mortgaged to produce it. The wedding took place at Chantilly on May 17th, and the Constable danced with the Duchesse d'Angoulême to show that if a lady of seventy could be nimble, a gentleman of seventy-five would not be left behind. Condé was no sooner back at Court than he realised the truth of the position. He carried off his wife to Holland, and lived there till all chance of peril ended with the King's life. Everyone, in fact, was happy except Henri Quatre. He failed again.

After all the festivities were over the young wife of the Constable's son was left at Chantilly rather lonely, "making quantities of fans, and setting her ladies to embroidery," writes the steward. But troubles soon began. Her mother refused to pay a dowry. The Constable replied by refusing to pay for their keep at Chantilly. They left the place, and never returned



284.—ACROSS THE MOAT.

to it again. The marriage, which had been nothing but a ceremony, was annulled. The old idea of Mlle. de Vendôme was again mooted ; but again the King's plans failed. In May, 1610, the murderous knife of Ravillac had ended all his schemes for ever.

The young Princess of Condé hurried back to Chantilly from Brussels, and her father must have been glad to see her. He was now anxious to get his son's future assured. Soon after he had seen him safely married to Maria Félice Orsini, daughter of the Duke of Bracciano, and had given him the Montmorency estates to keep up the dignity of "Admiral of France," which came to him from Damville, the old Constable went down to Languedoc to end his days in peace ; and at La Grange des Près he died at the ripe age of eighty years, in 1614.

Eighteen years afterwards this son was beheaded, and Chantilly was confiscated to the Crown ; but by the good offices of Anne of Austria it passed again to its legitimate heiress, his sister, the Princess of Condé, in 1643.



Her son, the great Condé, was to change the whole face of the estate, and he held it all his life, save for those five years which followed his disgrace, when the struggle against Mazarin had thrown him into the arms of Spain. As a matter of fact, the great Condé was at one time as great a traitor to France as his ancestor the Constable de Bourbon, and perpetrated far worse treason than that which had brought his uncle to the scaffold. At twenty-two years of age he defeated the allied Spanish and German armies at Rocroy. At Freiborg, at Nordlingen, at Lens, he beat them again. Suddenly he turned round and vanquished the French army he had so often led to victory. He even placed himself at the head of the Spaniards he had so often beaten, and led them against France. But France forgave him everything. For the sake of the glories of his youth she forgot the mistakes of later years. In 1668 she saw him turn once more upon the Spaniards and wrest Franche-Comté from their rule. In 1671 she was celebrating his loyalty and patriotism at the gorgeous reception of Louis XIV at Chantilly. Mme. de Sévigné has, fortunately, a good deal to say about it in her letters. The friend of Fouquet, she had known, ten years before, of that legendary fête at Vaux-le-Vicomte which was the prelude to his tragic fall. There was a touch of tragedy about the fête at Chantilly, too; but the catastrophe was neither so tremendous in its issues, nor so far reaching in its effects. The festivities of Condé only cost the life of Fouquet's former *maitre d'hôtel*.

The King arrived, and stayed from the evening of April 23rd to the evening of the 26th. Condé seemed ready to board and lodge the whole of France. He prepared four meals a day, at which five courses were served at five-and-twenty tables. The house was flooded with flowers; the gardens were stuffed with triumphal arches, fireworks, dances, "theatricals" and games. Gourville, the steward, was at his wits' end. Hébert had been sent by Mme. de Sévigné to help him, and brought six coffers of fine linen for the use of the Court. Everybody watched the weather with the keenest anxiety, till Louis XIV brought the sunshine with him. Le Roi Soleil for once justified his name. His Majesty gave them a taste of his quality without delay, and forthwith started stag hunting by moonlight, while the huntsmen held lanterns ahead of the royal suite. Supper followed among the jonquils. The joints of roast meat did not quite go round all the five-and-twenty tables, and Vatel—the great Vatel, with memories of inexhaustible Vaux-le-Vicomte behind him—was sadly harassed. He called Gourville to his assistance: "For twelve nights I have not slept; help me by sending out a few orders." Gourville sent Condé himself. The Prince realised the importance of the artist at so supreme a moment, and went to Vatel's own room to tell him "all had gone off splendidly, and the King's supper was magnificent." But nothing consoled Vatel's tortured soul for those two tables (the last two of the twenty-five), for which there had not been enough roast beef. Later on, the fireworks—which had cost sixteen thousand francs to set in order—were a failure. At four in the morning he could stay tossing on his couch no longer. He wandered all over the château, finding everyone else fast asleep. At the kitchen door he met a little messenger from the provision merchant, carrying two baskets of fish. Two baskets, the result of having ransacked every port in France! It was the last straw. Still Vatel waited. No more fish arrived. He rushed to Gourville, overwhelmed with the horror of the situation. Gourville laughed at him. He went to his own room, leant his sword against the door, and at the third attempt drove it through his heart. As he fell dying on the floor, fish began to pour into Chantilly from every harbour on the Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts. Messenger after messenger ran up to Vatel's room for orders, and ran back again, spreading consternation in the Court. "The poor fellow believed in what he understood by honour," smiled one. "No more chances of a picnic on the march to Burgundy," growled another. The King swore he would never put his subjects to such pains again. But it was all too late for Vatel. He lay dead upstairs, and the festivities went on without him. Even a Vatel is not indispensable.

Both the Prince of Condé and his son, the Duc d'Enghien (then just twenty-eight), were deeply distressed. His nephews, the two Princes of Conti, were with him, but his wife—the natural hostess on so great an occasion—was spared their troubles. Claire-Clémence de Maillé-Brézé was not there. She had been banished to Châteauroux "ad multos annos," writes Mme. de Sévigné, with sinister insistence, "pour l'éternité." The châtelaines of Chantilly have certainly not been invariably fortunate. Society must have noticed her absence;





285.—JEAN BULLANT'S FACADE.



but society is usually careful not to emphasise unpleasant facts. The festivities came to a close on the Saturday evening, and the Court went back with the King, to talk them all over at leisure, on the backstairs of Versailles.

The next year the great Condé was fighting again, at that fatal passage of the Rhine, when he went across and across the river with his son by his side, with his nephew, the Duc de Longueville, dead beneath his cloak, with M. de Montchevreuil (Enghien's attaché) bleeding mortally, in the same boat. Many more were slain in a useless butchery by Dutch soldiers, who asked nothing better than surrender. The Prince's affections became centred, with

extraordinary force and vigour, on his son. They fought ever side by side, and the father's anxious eye was ever on his heir. At Lenef he beat the Prince of Orange. In 1675, when all France was mourning the great Turenne, Condé and his son were still fighting grimly in Alsace. Together they faced Montecuculli and hurled him back across the Rhine. It was the great general's last fight. After 1675 he retired to his "Apothéose de Chantilly," with his beloved son, his daughter-in-law, his nephews, with Bossuet, Racine, Corneille. But a cloud had descended on that ardent spirit. He seemed more and more to withdraw into himself. He became careless of



286.—THE INNER COURT OF THE CAPITAINERIE.

his dress, and "even let his beard grow," writes Mme. de Sévigné, in the extremity of astonishment. But he seemed ever kind and gentle, and, as I shall show, he quietly devoted his energies to beautifying his château and his estates.

His repose was broken in 1680 by the marriage of his nephew, the Prince de Conti, with Mlle. de Blois, daughter of Louise de la Vallière. He shaved his beard off, wore a long coat sown with diamonds, powdered his hair, put on his famous sword all glistening with jewels, and faced the wedding ceremony like a man. The bride had five hundred thousand crowns of gold from her royal father, and was by no means disinclined to take all the flattery she could get.





287.—JEAN BULLANT'S "CAPITAINE."



In the midst of her gaieties she caught the smallpox. Her husband, returning with his brother from expeditions in Poland and from certain traitorous plots against the good of France, only escaped exile and punishment by dying from his wife's disease. The lady herself recovered, "and," smiles Mme. de Sévigné, "with 100,000 crowns of income she will soon console herself." With the old Condé it was otherwise. His last festivities had not proved lucky. His approaching end was heralded by supernatural presages of death. The ghost of Chantilly reappeared, and even the stern soul of the conqueror of Rocroy seemed to acknowledge the coming of the King of Terrors. He had already joined the Catholic faith, and he now wrote a noble letter of loyalty, of devotion, of farewell, to the King. In December, 1686, he died, and was accorded a magnificent public funeral in Notre Dame. His memory is still the greatest of the great associations of the château of Chantilly, and the mark of his constructive genius has been left for ever on the place by the handiwork of La Quintinie, of Le Nôtre, of many another. The town of Chantilly itself was due entirely to the numberless visits of royal and illustrious personages which necessitated accommodation for their suite in houses near the château, and to the convenience of sheltering the vast army of workmen occupied in the reconstruction of

the park and gardens from 1663 onwards. It was large enough already to have its own parish church in 1692.

France has suffered far more than England from wanton and unnecessary vandalism. Nearly half of those magnificent private houses which were the chief architectural result of the Renaissance have either been destroyed or altered past all recognition. They were the first to be wrecked by



288.—THE CORNER TOWERS.

the iconoclasts of the Revolution; but in far too many cases these iconoclasts only cleared the ground of vast and senseless constructions with which the nobles themselves had replaced the dignified and beautiful dwelling-places created for their ancestors in the sixteenth century. In this connection it is impossible to forget that a member of the family of Condé pulled down the entrance to Ecouen, sold the Château of Creil for old materials, demolished De l'Orme's buildings at St. Maur and destroyed Bullant's design at Fère-en-Tardenois. In these circumstances it is fortunate that we have Bullant's work left at Chantilly. The greater triangular castle beside it was only repaired, but left untouched in all essentials by the great Condé. The portions erected by his successors were destroyed by the Revolution. Daumet's modern work, ordered by the Duc d'Aumale, has at least the merit of preserving the old ground plan and the great round towers, whatever we may think of its decorative detail and exterior flourishes. It has also preserved many splendid relics of that passion for art collecting which was a characteristic of the Condé family.

The picture of Amsterdam in 1659, now in the "Cabinet des Antiques," is one of those bought by the great Condé, and the record of its payment exists, with that of many other works



of art he collected during his Dutch campaigns. Of his portraits, done before 1676, there is little documentary evidence, though the admirable terra-cotta bust on the chimney-piece of the "Cabinet des Livres" is almost certainly by Coysevox. Juste d'Egmont's portraits of him are in the "Salon de Condé" (1654) and in the "Salle des Gardes" (1662), and David Teniers' delicate portrayal of those strangely characteristic features hangs in the "Cabinet Clouet." It has been engraved by Lisebetten. Condé also ordered from Henri and Charles Beaubrun the portraits of Mme. and Mlle. de Longueville now in the "Cabinet Clouet." The accounts of 1679 also mention a payment to Chéron, sculptor of the well-known Condé medal. Unfortunately Le Brun's portrait (mentioned in the manuscripts of 1677) is not here, and he is only represented by the *Pomponne de Bellièvre* in the "Cabinet Clouet." The *Saint Jerome* of Gerard Dow (1678); the *Perseus and Andromeda* of Mignard (1679), of which M. Macon has reproduced two fine sketches in his invaluable book, *Les Arts dans la Maison de Condé*; the views of



289.—THE STATUE OF LE NOTRE.

Chantilly by Levinus Cruyl, whose pen-drawing of the courtyard (1680) is still there; the *Baptism of St. John* by Albani (now represented by a Magdalen in the "Cabinet Giotto"); the nativity of Annibale Carracci (whose work is in the "Gallery"); De Witte's painting of a church interior; Van der Meulen's *Sack of Maestricht*; Antonio Moro's *Christ with St. Peter*—all these are no longer in the magnificent collection handed over at Chantilly by the Duc d'Aumale to the Institut de France. But most of Le Nôtre's work is still there.

With his nephew, Claude Desgots (landscape gardener at Bagnolet, Saint-Maur and the Palais Royal), and with La Quintinie, Le Nôtre began work at Chantilly in 1663. Manse, the engineer, made pumps for him; Daniel Gitard, the architect who built Saint-Sulpice and the Hôtel de Condé in Paris, was here too, until he was succeeded by his son Pierre. Even the great Vauban himself was called in. By 1678 the name of the younger Mansart appears in the



accounts. Between the château and the town, Le Nôtre transformed the park with the orangery, the gardens and fountains "of Beauvais," the canals and porticoes of the smaller forest. The great terrace in front of the castle entrance was begun as well, and carvings for it were made by Jacques and Etienne Blanchard. In 1666 the great formal garden between the château and the river was laid out by Le Nôtre. Five years afterwards the pavilion called the "Maison de Sylvie," in the park, was redecorated, and the waterworks were finished. In 1673 the great terrace at the entrance was still in course of construction, and soon afterwards the canalisation of the Nonette was undertaken. The stairway of the great terrace was built by Gitard, and the statues between columns beneath it and the groups of Neptune and the Naiads were carved by Jean Hardy after Le Nôtre's designs. In 1685 Mansart was commissioned to make certain alterations in Jean Bullant's "little château" or "capitainerie," as it was sometimes called. He was helped by Hardy, Roger, Duchesnoy and Leblanc; but only the constructive work remains, for the interior was redecorated in 1720, in the Louis XV style it still exhibits.

By 1687 it was Henri-Jules, son of the great Condé, who was entertaining the Dauphin at

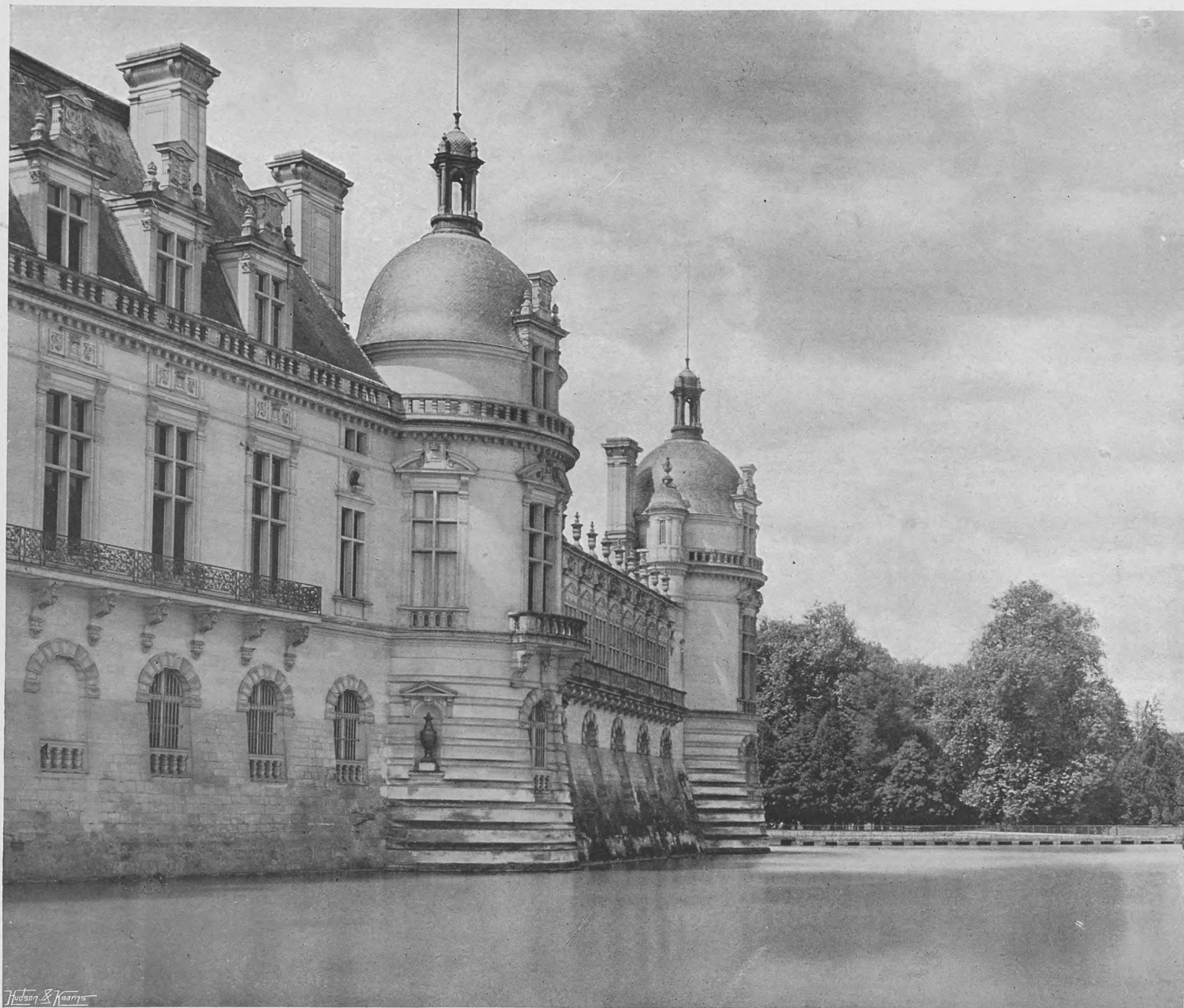


290.—THE GREAT STAIRWAY.

Chantilly, and the numberless fountains, groves and pavilions were mightily admired. There was a "Boulingrin" also, which Englishmen will recognise as a bowling green, and a pheasantry, but the Dauphin seems chiefly to have enjoyed the water-party on the canals and lakes. Mansart, meanwhile, was hard at work remodelling the old, triangular manor-house beside Bullant's beautiful little building. The sketches for this transformation still exist, but the building itself has disappeared. Fortunately some of the work done by artists at that time has survived. The marble statue of the great Condé, which was mutilated at the Revolution, may still be seen at Chantilly. It was ordered by his son from Antoine Coysevox, to stand in the centre of Le Nôtre's parterres. Deseine restored the head and arm in 1817. Nicolas Coustou (who has left fine work at Rouen) was the nephew of Coysevox and the son-in-law of Houass, the painter. His lions carved for Chantilly have been replaced by the hounds of the sculptor Cain, and his sphinxes had fallen into such disrepair that they were carefully reproduced, by the Duc d'Aumale's orders, by the work of Watrinelle. The huge Molossi at the bottom of the great terrace stairway were begun by Thierry in 1707 and finished by Coustou. The busts of



Roman Emperors on the façade of the little château, the Venus in marble (copied from the antique) in the English garden, and the Bacchus and Silenus near the Grand Canal were bought from one Alvarez, whose speciality it was to bring statuary from Italy at the end of the seventeenth century, for the gardens of the great. The statues of "Earth" and "Water" in the Parc de la Cabotière were carved in stone by Antoine Poissant in 1700. The statue of Louis XIV conquering the Fronde in the courtyard of the little château, and the busts of Turenne and Condé on the mantel-piece of the "Galerie des Batailles," were done by Jérôme Derbais, and sold to the owner of Chantilly in 1707. The lions at the entry of the "Route du Connétable" near the edge of the forest are by Legrand, who was paid for them in the same year. In the Vertugadin are copies by the same sculptor of Marsy's "Air," from Versailles, and Dozier's "Fire."



291.—CORNER OF THE DUC D'AUMALE'S CHATEAU.

Henri-Jules, son of the great Condé, died in 1709; his son Louis (husband of Louise Françoise, daughter of Mme. de Montespan) in 1710; the next heir was Louis-Henri, seventh Prince of Condé, who took the title of Duc de Bourbon. Under his rule were built by Aubert those colossal stables which are one of the architectural wonders of Chantilly. Here there is no insistent multiplicity of detail. The tendency to gigantic scale that had been growing all through the reign of Louis XIV here reaches its zenith. Boldness of idea, simplicity of form, stupendous size have risen from Versailles to this. Its artistic inheritors are the builders of the new Gare d'Orléans in Paris. The complete plan appears in Dubourg's drawings, and Aubert's designs are in the Bibliothèque Nationale. The main hall is one hundred and eighty-six metres by eighteen, with a height of nearly fourteen metres to the entablature; and they



are so easily accessible to visitors that I need say no more of them here. The white and gold carved woodwork in the "Appartement du Grand Condé" of the capitainerie was placed there by the Duc de Bourbon much as it is now. In its ante-chamber are his favourite hounds painted by Desportes, and two of the hunting pictures Oudry painted for him are also preserved.

Nattier's sumptuous portrait of Mlle. de Clermont, in the large gallery, is a reminder that the Duke's sister was the heroine of one of the romances of Chantilly which became most famous in the early eighteenth century owing to the fashionable writings of Mme. de Genlis. This lovely Marie de Bourbon was deeply attached to a courtier of Louis XV, named Louis de Melun, Duc de Joyeuse. Her brother would not hear of a marriage; he had far higher views. But the lovers found a way, and in a dairy in the castle park they were united by a priest upon a summer evening in July, 1724. The very next day the young husband, out hunting in Chantilly with the King, was badly wounded by the antlers of a stag at bay. He died a few hours afterwards in the château, and his body was taken away to Lille for burial with his ancestors. Through it all Mlle. de Clermont had to conceal her grief, and what that meant one may, perhaps, imagine from the delicately sensitive face in Rosalba Carriera's pastel, which seems to me more likely to be true than the elaborate *mise-en-scène* of Nattier's larger painting.



292.—JEAN HARDY'S FOUNTAIN.

In 1740 Louis-Joseph de Bourbon-Condé was but four years old when he found himself the master of Chantilly. He was but seventeen when he married Charlotte Elizabeth Godefride de Rohan-Soubise. His son was that Duc d'Enghien, husband of Charlotte de Rohan, whom Napoleon murdered in 1804. He was as great a builder as almost any of his predecessors. Leroy carried out works for him at Chantilly, where the new

Duke made many alterations and additions in the park. He cut the great alley through the wood called Pont le Roi; he minutely embellished the portions of the estate called La Cabotière and Sylvie, the famous view called "The Three Alleys" being due to him in the former, and a labyrinth, with groves of Theseus and of Ariadne, in the latter. He built Isles of Love, Chinese kiosques, pavilions of Venus and theatres for Molière's plays, decorated by Canot, Guillet, Guibert, Martin, Suard and many more. In 1769 he found even the Château of Chantilly too small for his growing household, so in that year Leroy built the Château d'Enghien just outside the terrace, in which the Institut de France lodges the official guardians of the "Musée Condé." Finally he laid out a little toy-hamlet in the woods. Marie Antoinette played at rustic simplicity in much the same way; and the thatched roofs barely hid the gilding underneath. In a few years the thatch was ablaze, and the rustic had assumed a startling individuality of his own.

The fall of the Bastille gave the Duke a most unpleasant shock in the midst of his Temples of Venus and his labyrinths of Love. On July 17th, 1789, he was among the first of the nobility to emigrate. At Turin, he heard sad stories of what the National Assembly proposed to do with his belongings. As a matter of fact, a detachment of the National Guard had come to Chantilly that August, and taken away the cannon grouped round the statue of the Constable Montmorency. Two years afterwards, the National agents worked for one hundred and forty-two days at an inventory of the château and its contents. Pictures, medals, statues,





293.—TAPESTRY IN THE DUC D'AUMALE'S DINING-ROOM.





294.—A DOORWAY IN THE CHATEAU.

curiosities of all sorts were packed off to the National Museum. Bronzes, ironwork and equestrian groups were huddled pell-mell into the National Mint.

From 1793 to 1794 Chantilly served as a common gaol of the department. It was then turned into a hospital, and after that into barracks. Many of the noblest historic houses in France still suffer the same ignominious fate. The condition, for instance, of the Palace of the Popes at Avignon, of the castle of King René at Tarascon, of many another relic of departed splendour, is a disgrace to any nation calling itself civilised. Even complete reconstruction were a better fate. Chantilly suffers neither.

The Duc de Bourbon, coming back in 1814, must, however, have felt little hope of any happiness to come. He was seventy-eight. His son was already an old man. Both were still mourning the untimely fate of the Duc d'Enghien.

The Palais Bourbon had been given up to the State as the *Chambre des Députés*. Even the *Hôtel de Lassay* had gone too. Without a roof to shelter him in Paris, the Duke found the great *Château* of Chantilly levelled to the height of the terrace, and the little *château* in apparently fatal disrepair.



He died in 1824, after a pathetic effort to collect together the scattered relics of his ancient house. His heir was the late Duc d'Aumale, who reconstructed Chantilly in its present state; and what the old Duke had somehow saved from the ruins of the Revolution may perhaps best be realised in the chapel of the new château, which the Duc d'Aumale built and bequeathed to the Institut de France.

The associations of this chapel go back to that Jean le Bouteiller who was first Seigneur of Chantilly in 1286, the body of whose son was found when it was rebuilt on the old site in 1718. That site is now taken up by Daumet's spiral staircase, and in 1876 this architect built for the



295.—HEAD OF THE NEW STAIRCASE.



Duc d'Aumale the new chapel at the southern angle of the courtyard. The old donjon-tower of the ancient walls has been very cleverly utilised as the new apse behind the altar. This altar was itself sculptured by Jean Gonjon for the chapel of Ecouen, in which also the stained glass and the best of the carved woodwork at Chantilly originally stood. Behind the altar are the



296.—DAUMET'S STAIRCASE.

magnificent bronze figures of Prudence, Religion, Justice and Piety, by Jacques Sarrazin. They were made for President Perrault in memory of his old master, Henri de Bourbon, father of the great Condé, and first erected in 1663 in the Church of the Jesuits in the Rue Sainte Antoine. In 1648 Sarrazin made the first clay models of the statues, bas-reliefs and panels, and Henri

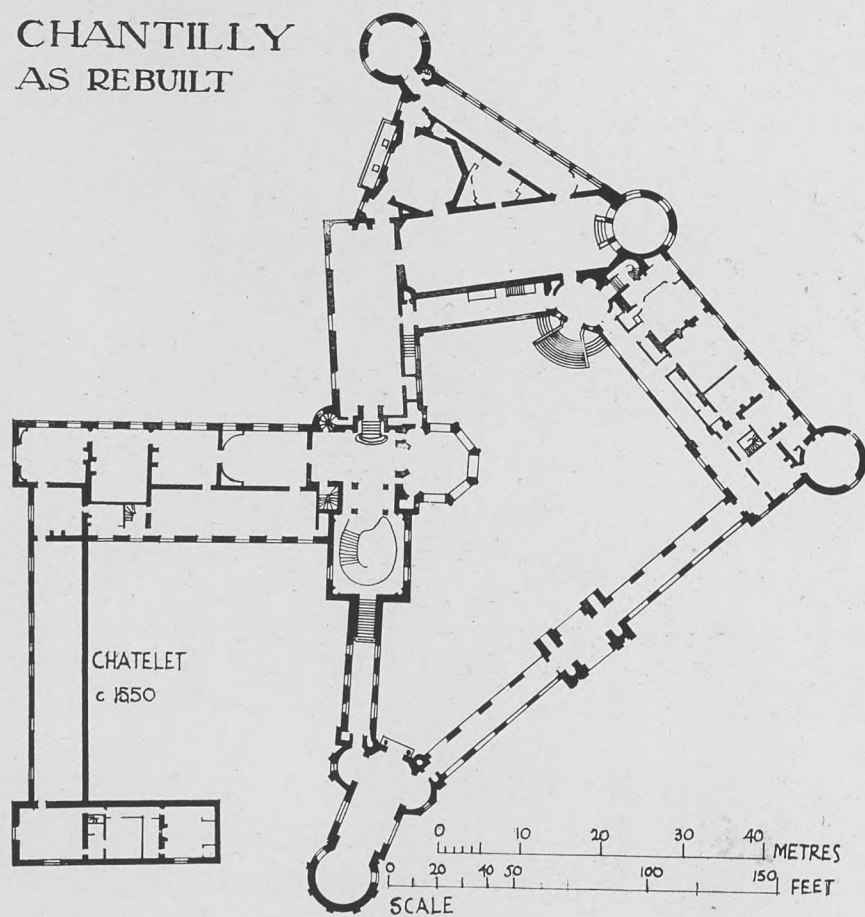


Perlan contracted to cast them for twenty-six thousand livres ; but he died in 1656, and the work was finished by Denis Prévost and François Picard in 1663. It was saved by Lenoir (for the Musée des Petits Augustins) in 1793, after the Duc de Bourbon had given orders (from his exile in 1791) that its most precious portion, containing the hearts of the members of the Condé family, should be transported to Chantilly church. Even here they were not allowed to rest long in peace. The Goddess of Reason was abroad in the land, and the hearts in their leaden cases were hurled into the cemetery ditch. A pious friend of the family dug them up at night and hid them in his cellar until 1814.

When the old Duc de Bourbon returned, he was able to rescue the treasures of the chapel of Ecouen, and the Sarrazin bronzes were handed over to him by the King. The hearts were restored to the safe keeping of Chantilly parish church, and the Duke's was added to them in 1830. In 1866 the Duc d'Aumale's son, Louis d'Orléans, Prince de Condé, died at Sydney, and his heart was brought back to Dreux ; but in 1876 these glorious relics were all reunited in the new chapel that exists to-day, and are guarded by the statues of Jacques Sarrazin, as is but right, under the special care of the Institut de France and the holy patronage of Saint Louis.

Within it are the hearts of Henri de Bourbon-Condé (died 1646), of his son, the great Condé (1686), of Henri-Jules (1709), Louis (1710), Louis-Henri, Duc de Bourbon (1740), Charles, Comte de Charolais (1760), Louis, Comte de Clermont (1771), of the Duc de Bourbon (1830), and of Louis d'Orléans (1866). Within it masses are sung forever to their memory, and to that of the unhappy Duc d'Enghien (1804), of Louis-Joseph de Bourbon (1818), Marie d'Orléans, Duchess of Wurtemberg (1839), Ferdinand, Duc d'Orléans (1842), Mme. Adelaïde, sister of Louis-Philippe (1847), Louis-Philippe, the King (1850), Louise, Queen of the Belgians (1850), Leopold, Prince of Salerno, father of the Duchesse d'Aumale (1851), Queen Marie-Amélie (1866), the Duchesse d'Aumale (1869), François d'Orléans, Duc de Guise, second son of the Duc d'Aumale (1872), Marie-Clémentine, Archduchess of Austria, mother of the Duchesse d'Aumale (1881), Antoine d'Orléans, Duc de Montpensier (1890), Louis d'Orléans, Duc de Nemours (1896), and Henri d'Orléans, Duc d'Aumale, the brave and gentle-hearted soldier whose death, on May 7th, 1897, placed upon the long list of Chantilly's princely châtelains a name that was worthy to conclude it.

CHANTILLY  
AS REBUILT



296A.—PLAN.



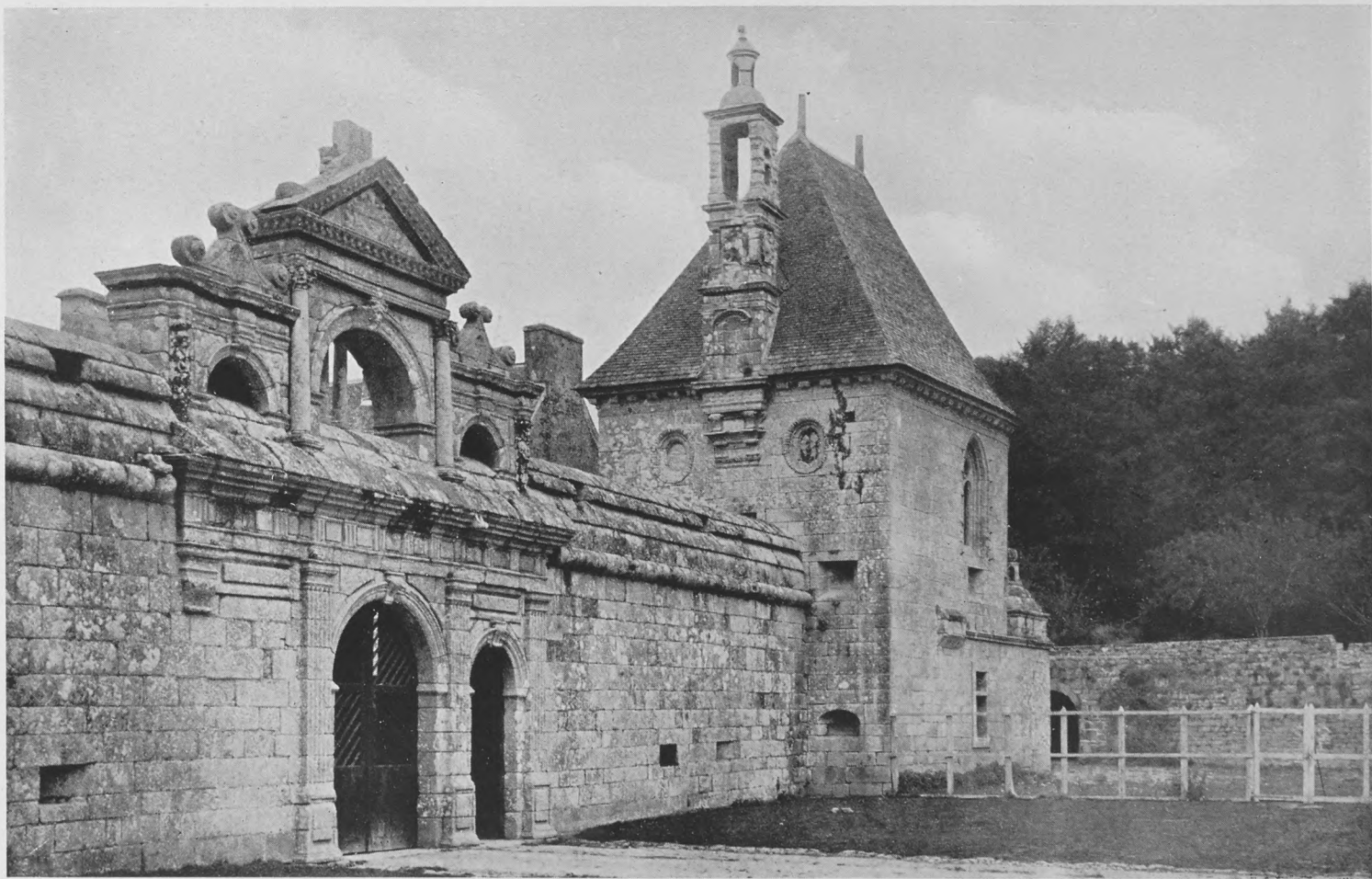
## CHAPTER XX.

## KERJEAN, BRITTANY.\*

Un autel patriotique élevé à la gloire et à la mémoire de la Bretagne ancienne et moderne. — M. DUJARDIN-BEAUMETZ, April, 1911.

**T**HIRTY-TWO kilometres from Morlaix, and twelve kilometres from St. Pol de Léon, on the road from Landivisiau to Plouescat, there rises from the midst of the woods near Saint-Vougay a huge rampart of granite, six metres thick, guarded by great crenellated bastions at every corner, and surrounded by a mighty moat. Like an enchanted castle, hidden in a haunted wood, Kerjean's ivy-covered fortalice seems at first sight the appropriate home of Brittany's romantic melancholy. Its romance has vanished now, though it once inspired the "Barberine" of Alfred de Musset, some of the "Trophées" of José-Maria de Hérédia and Kératry's "Le Dernier des Beaumanoir." Very typical of the genius of the surrounding country is this solid mass of worked stone. You may reach it, in these days of rapid travel, by motor from Morlaix, through Saint-Thégonnec, Kermad, Guimiliau, Lampaul, Landivisiau and Saint-Vougay, where the tombs of some of its first owners lie in the parish church.

The first seigneur of Kerjean worthy of record was Henri Olivier, who had married Marguerite de Landivisiau in 1444, and by the sixteenth century it passed from their family to that of Jean Barbier of Larnanuz, who in 1530 married Jeanne de Parcevaux, and by his second wife, Jeanne de Kersauson, had a son named Louis. Jean's statue is in the church of Saint-Vougay, and only two years before his death (in 1538) he had obtained leave to "rebuild" the



297.—THE ENTRANCE GATE.

\* The Property of the French Government.





298.—THE MUNIMENT ROOM FROM WITHIN THE COURT.



ancient residence of which no traces now remain. By his brother, Hamon, the money absorbed by the massive structures now owned by the Government of France was cheerfully provided; for the good Hamon Barbier was Canon of Léon, Nantes and Cornouailles, Abbé of Saint Mathieu, Fin de Terre, Archdeacon of Quéménéty-Illy, Rector of Plougoulm, Plounévez-Lochrist, Plouzané, Plourien, Guipavas, Plabennec, Plounéor-Trez, Plaugar, Lannilis, Guimiliau, Sizun and Ile de Batz! If you can still breathe after pronouncing this list of ecclesiastical cacophonies, you will hardly wonder that even Pope Paul III was a trifle astonished at the multifarious benefices of so resolute a pluralist. Men have, no doubt, used such opportunities better; but, then, they have also and often used them worse. The château of Kerjean is their chiefly visible



299.—THE COURTYARD.

result to-day; for the enlightened Canon put all his money into granite for the habitation of his fortunate ward and nephew, Louis, Seigneur of Kerjean, Kerhoent, Kerallau, Kerbi-quet and Lanoen. Louis Barbier, who married Françoise Morizur, began to build in 1553. Unluckily, the somewhat harsh symphonies of the local nomenclature are rather too faithfully reflected in the architecture of the castle, which Palustre has somewhat bombastically described as "the Versailles of Brittany." He can only have been thinking of its size, and even a length of two hundred and fifty metres by a breadth of one hundred and fifty metres (in the outer walls) is not

sufficient justification for the comparison. It is within this guarded space that the château itself stands, its mass of main building at the back flanked by two side wings, with an entrance screen and gateway which look like a very clumsy copy of the beautifully proportioned entrance gate of Anet.

It is this entrance screen which you see first when you have passed the fortified gate of the outer wall. The lopsided look of the archways, due to there being only one small door for foot passengers on the right of the carriage-way, is an unnecessary grievance. The rugged granite does not lend itself to decoration, and it is not decoration that you desire; but the



architect has evidently tried to produce an ornamental effect which has quite failed, and has (just as evidently) missed his chance of grouping masses with effectiveness or dignity. The arches and columns above the gateway are singularly badly placed on the rough coping of the heavy wall, and the attempts at detail carving are merely incongruous on the unyielding surface of coldly unsympathetic granite, which seems only made for casemates and the sterner uses of defence. In fact, the Breton designer had it in his mind to make an impregnable fortress, and could never bring himself to realise those slighter charms of graceful habitation by which a



300.—FROM THE COURTYARD.

greater artist transformed the feudal strongholds of an earlier age into the country houses and palaces of the Valley of the Loire.

On each side of the gateway are two square pavilions with high, sloping roofs of slate ; the one on your right is the chapel, the one on the left the muniment-room. On the inner side of each is stuck a belfry, another pathetic effort to attain something lighter and more attractive than the designer's fancy can achieve. On the inner side, the entrance screen is not much



more happily conceived ; and, indeed, the most attractive part of it, invisible either from without or from the inner court, is the broad paved walk from the chapel to the muniment-room over the top of the huge wall which connects the two ; and from this walk the extremely unscholarly nature of the whole design of the main entrance is very sadly and very clearly visible. If this part can be said to have any style, I suppose it would be that connected with Henry II and Charles IX. The work seems to have slowly continued through the reigns of Henri IV and Louis XIII, until we find at least a century of architecture (from 1550 to 1650) in the completed pile.

The east wing on the right of the main building at the back was burnt down more than two hundred years ago and has never been rebuilt, but its heavy façade and empty windows still



301.—PAVED GALLERY LEADING FROM THE CHAPEL TO THE MUNIMENT-ROOM.

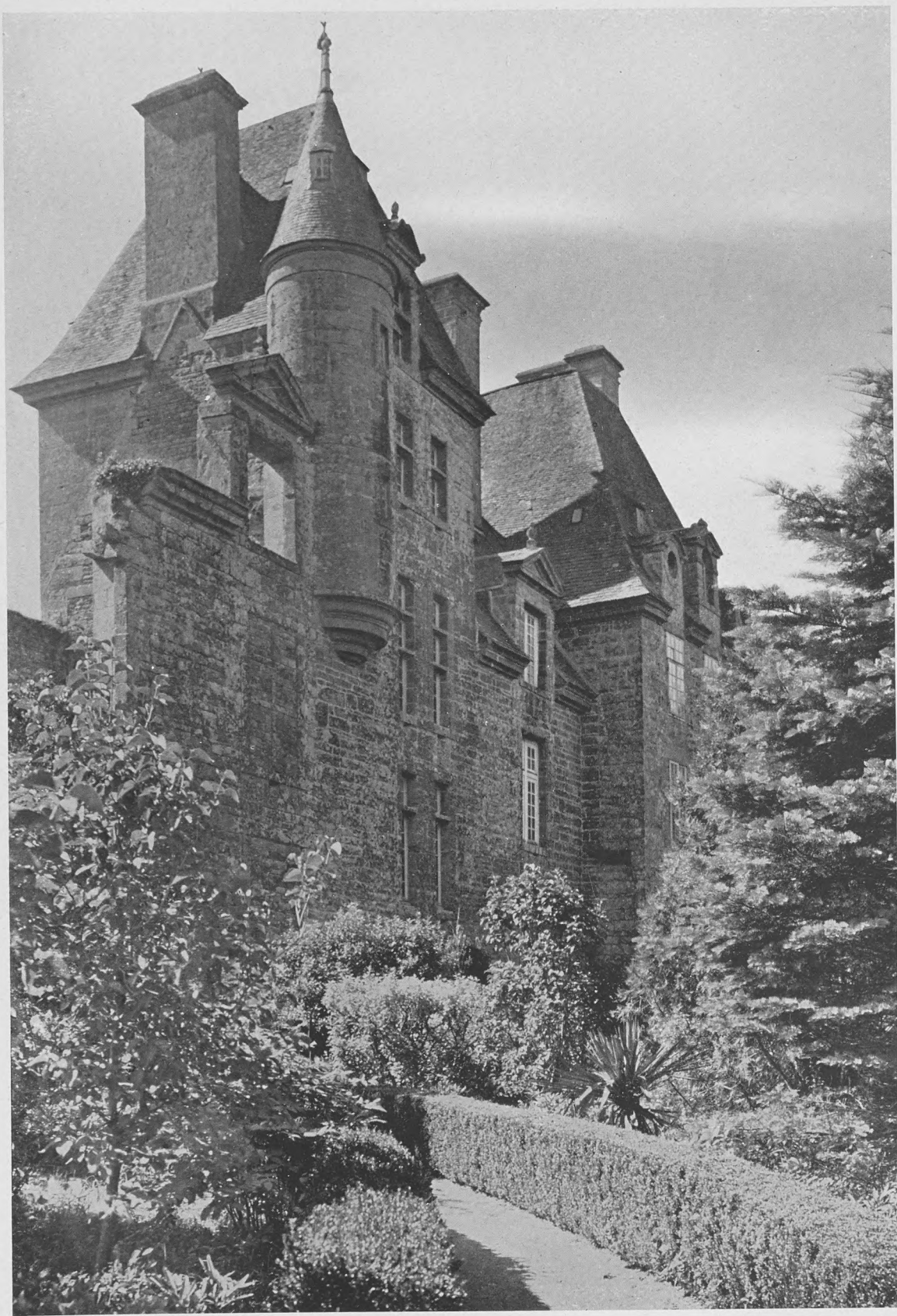
remain. Louis Barbier, who did the feudal service of an egg to the Sire de Maillé at Lanhouarneau every year, died in 1596, after having fought his best for Henry III, to whom he is known to have sent a leash of fine greyhounds, and then for Henry IV. His heir, François, who married Catherine de Goesbriant, had a son, René, who was a close friend of Henry IV. The *Vert Galant* gave him the Order of St. Michael and made him a Gentleman of the Royal Bedchamber ; and still higher promotion followed in the next reign, for Louis XIII made René a Marquis in 1618. This latter dignity is connected in the popular mind with a story of René's wife, Françoise de Quélen, which is often wrongly told (by André Hallays, for instance) of an earlier châtelaine in the fifteenth century. The facts, as far as we shall ever know them, seem to be that Françoise de Quélen (the heroine of De Musset's "Barberine") was sufficiently attractive to have aroused the amorous ambitions of four gallants at the Court of Marie de' Médici, to



whom her husband had hastened to do his homage after the murder of Henry IV. Their names—they merit no other memory—were de Belz, de Bruc, de Bombelle and Saint-Phar, and they made the characteristic wager that if the husband would remain at court his wife would be unable to withstand the united attack of all their charms in combination. Françoise, however, remained unmoved. One after another they were imprisoned in a convenient dungeon and set to carding flax and hemp. The mere fact that Louis XIII made her husband a Marquis does not incline me to believe that the youthful monarch was welcomed with any greater favour than his licentious subjects; nor can I wholly endorse the further suggestion that the flax and hemp industry in Brittany received its initial impulse from so unworthy a beginning.

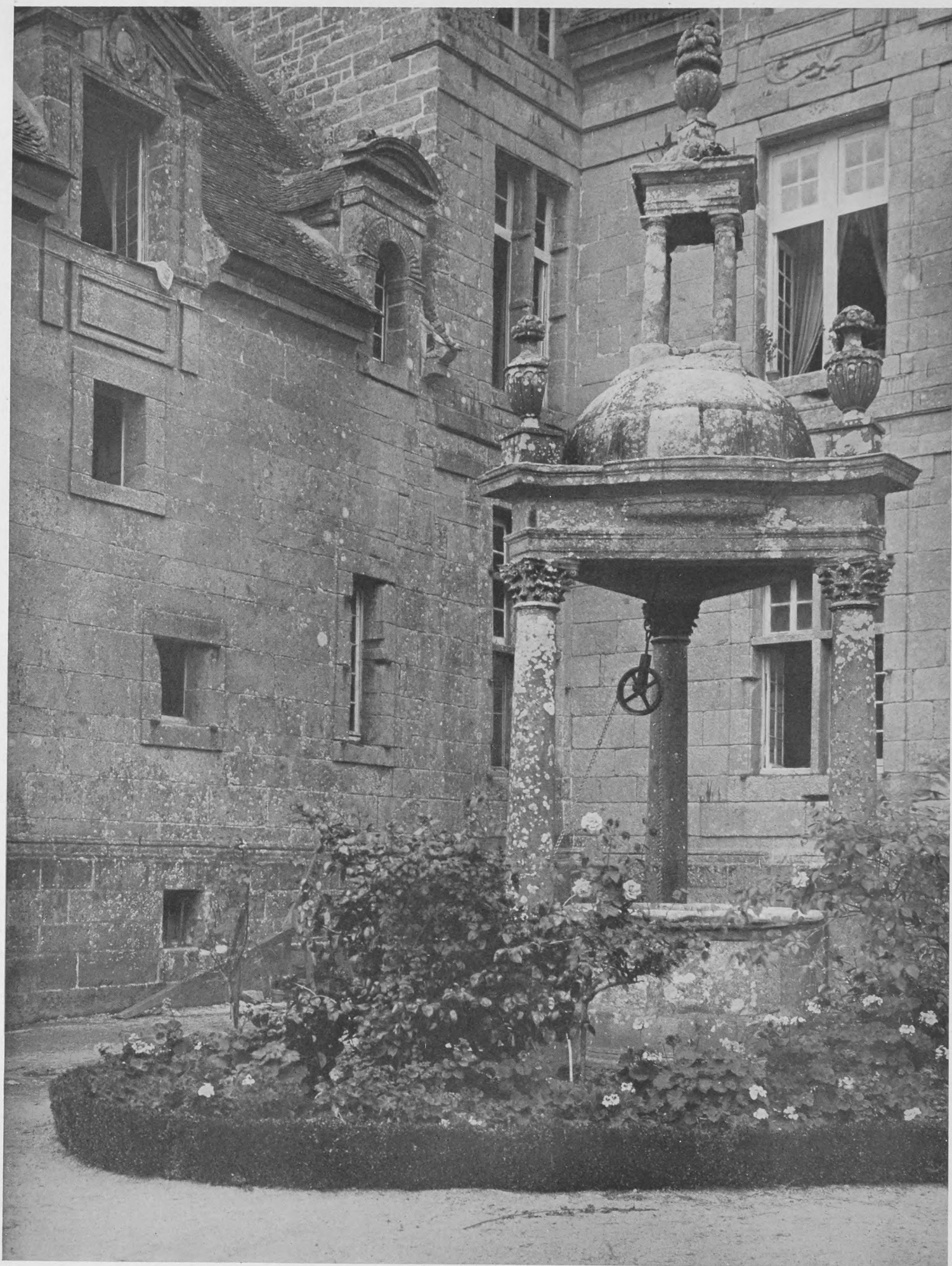
The son of Françoise, René II, who was nearly killed by the fire in the north-east wing, married Françoise de Parcevaux, a lady-in-waiting to Anne of Austria, by whom he had a son, Joseph Barbier, born in 1636. Joseph's sister, Euphrasie, married Alexandre de Coatanscours in 1689, whose son, Alexandre II (born in 1690), became a colonel of the Mousquetaires in

1714, at the age of twenty-four, and in the same year married Louise-Marguerite de Chambon. Their daughter, Suzanne Augustine de Coatanscours (born in 1724), became one of the legendary heroines of Kerjean. She married (rather late in life for those days) Louis-François Gilles, Marquis de Kersauson de Brézal. Widowed, childless and alone, she found herself in the midst of a hostile population, at the beginning of the Revolution, and she armed her castle for



302.—RUINS OF THE NORTH-EAST WING FROM THE GARDEN.





303.—THE WELL.



defence. Her *dossier*, with that of her sister, Baroness de Launay de l'Estaing, of St. Pol de Léon, is now in the archives. It bears pathetic testimony to the cruelty and lawlessness of that reign of blood and terror. A few letters from absent friends had reached the sisters, speaking of *le pauvre roi*, and of the miseries of the period. It was decided that "those who receive such letters are as guilty as those who write them," and the two ladies were guillotined on June 27th, 1794. It is still remembered in the district how Jean Bon Saint André came from Brest to arrest the indomitable old Marquise, who retreated step by step against superior force until they captured her in the kitchen, whence there were no further means of issue. The Terrorists spared what was left of the castle, "because of its value to the nation as a fortress." They probably found it was far too strongly built to be destroyed by the limited amount of precious gunpowder in their possession.

The unfortunate lady's great-nephew, Charles Marquis de Brilhac, came back from exile to his inheritance, and his daughter married the Comte de Coatgourden, whose family have but lately sold the estate, with the park and forests, to the French Government for two hundred and fifty thousand francs. Azay le Rideau cost only two hundred thousand francs to the same buyer, and it will be made the National Museum of the French Renaissance, just as the château of Saumur, under the guidance of M. Jean Stern and others, is to become the National Museum of Horsemanship. For Kerjean, apparently, much the same destiny is intended as was given to Kériolet, which Princess Narishkine presented to the Department of Finistère to be a district museum, a local Musée Carnavalet, like our new London Museum in Stafford House, or the beautiful Musée Arlatan, which Mistral inaugurated at Arles. It was acquired by the Minister of Fine Arts in 1910, and in the next year M. de Mun, speaking for the commune of Saint-Vougay, expressed the hope that Kerjean would be a museum of Breton history and archæology, after the fashion of the great Northern Museum in Stockholm, or the even more magnificent collection in Munich. This is a splendid instance of the way in which France and her citizens are beginning to realise that the care of her architectural treasures is a duty she owes not only to Frenchmen, but to lovers of architecture in all nations. It is her latest exemplification of her own expressive phrase that "Art has no frontiers; Beauty is for all the world." We have already met with several cases, in this series of French houses, where this precept has been nobly carried out either by private munificence, as at Langeais, or by public funds, as at Kerjean and Azay le Rideau. Only a few weeks ago the château of Ménars, which once belonged to Mme. de Pompadour, was put up for sale. Soon afterwards the same announcement was made about Tonnay-Charente, the ancient seat of the Rochechouart-Mortemart family, near Rochefort, and once the residence of Mme. de Montespan. More fortunate was Chaalis, the scene of Perrault's *Belle au Bois Dormant*; for this, with the historical estate around it, has been left by Mme. Edouard André to the Institut de France, which will guard its splendid art collections as a national museum. But in these matters the foreign observer is like Oliver Twist. After such brilliant preliminaries he asks for more. When will the Palace of the Popes at Avignon be rescued from the conditions which have too long degraded it, and be preserved as the unequalled and unapproachable shrine of all the best relics of the art and literature of Southern France?

As I finish these lines I feel that I have perhaps spoken too harshly of Kerjean's architecture. But what is State property should always be judged by the highest standards only. And I am able to conclude upon a different note. About a hundred yards from the castle, near the lake in the park, is a fountain which supports a huge top-heavy urn upon Ionic colonnettes. It just misses perfection, but it shows that the desire for loveliness was there. And in the courtyard near the main building is a well which, at a distance, has a great deal of charm. Only on closer examination do you discover the roughness of the carving, the clumsy way in which the topmost ornament is stuck upon the dome. Yet it is another instance of that wistful effort in search of beauty which is one of the characteristics of Breton workmanship. In that hard land of sea and granite the men and women seem never to have had leisure wholly to shake off the present menaces of death.



## CHAPTER XXI.

## MAINTENON.\*

AT daybreak on the morning of January 13th, 1684, a line of brilliant equipages swept through the great entrance gates of Maintenon into the courtyard of the château, where servants were drawn up to welcome expected guests, and the Bishop of Chartres was ready with his clergy, his choirboys and his acolytes to receive them in the chapel. Père la Chaise and Harley, Archbishop of Paris, preceded the new arrivals in that small but celebrated sanctuary. Louvois, the Minister, immediately followed the dignitaries of the Church, accompanied by Bontemps, Keeper of the Privy Purse. They had driven straight from the Royal Chapel at Versailles, where they had taken part in the first portion of a ceremony at which the Duc de Noailles and the Marquis de Montchevreuil were formal witnesses, and Nanon, a confidential maid-servant, had wept silent tears of happiness. The Mass, then celebrated by the Bishop of Chartres, assisted by the *cure* of the village, was the last act in the marriage of Françoise d'Aubigné, widow of Scarron and Marquise de Maintenon, to Louis XIV, King of France.†

Nothing of such vivid interest or such national importance had happened in Maintenon since the Gothic fortress, built during the stormy days of Philip Augustus, had received its Renaissance decorations from Cottereau, the Finance Minister of Francis I; and the personality of Mme. de Maintenon remains the outstanding feature of the estate still held by the descendants of her niece's husband, just as the memories of Anne of Brittany overshadow all other traditions in those noble rooms at Langeais where she was wedded to a former king. But the importance of the later episode was as much greater than the earlier as the power and influence of the Roi Soleil were wider than those of Charles VIII. If ever there was a woman who was a real factor in French history—and there have been many for whom, in praise or blame, that claim has been advanced—it was the Françoise d'Aubigné whose "sanctified common-sense" and immaculately polished morality are so ably reflected in Mignard's painting in the ante-chamber of her Apartment.

She looks like the living and deliberate embodiment of the forgotten fact that a beautiful woman of good birth might not only be virtuous, and even resoundingly respectable, but also reach the utmost limits of feminine ambition in the closing years of the seventeenth century. Her character is a problem now that is not without its fascination, even if its accidental defects sometimes obscure its sterling qualities; but it must have been a far more startling enigma to her contemporaries. You may in some degree adumbrate the situation by imagining the most spotless of Early Victorian wives and mothers set suddenly—in the unfaded charms of her first matronly beauty—among a supper party in modern Monte Carlo. Her letters are the exact equivalent of what the diary of such an imagined one might be: "I own to you, madame," she wrote to the Princesse des Ursins, "that the women of these days are intolerable to me; their senseless and immodest clothing, their tobacco, their wine, their gluttony, their laziness and coarse conversation, all that is so opposed to my taste, I cannot endure it."

Yet they "endured" her; nay, they struggled for her approbation. The waves of scandal broke in harmless foam against the crystal barriers of that frigid rectitude. Even "my taste"

\* The Property of the Duc de Noailles.

† Apart from those sources of information which are common property, such as the Memoirs and Letters of the time, I desire to acknowledge my special indebtedness (in this sketch) to "Madame de Maintenon, Her Life and Times," by C. C. Dyson (John Lane, 1910), a book which gathers together, in a convenient form, a number of quotations from the original authorities indispensable to any writer on this subject.



did not arouse those covert, but sincere, expressions of annoyance which one might so easily imagine possible in the case of our contemporary parallels. At twenty-five, as Mme. Scarron, she is described by Mlle. de Scudéry, who had scant reason to moderate her true opinions, as "tall, with a lovely figure and a fine air of distinction. Her pure complexion was exquisitely white, with hair of a light chestnut, a well-shaped nose, delicately modelled lips, and the most charming eyes imaginable, dark but brilliant, full of expression, becoming arch or tender in sympathy with the changes of her mood. Her speech was simple and unaffected, expressed in a sweet, harmonious voice that was as much a part of her general attractiveness as her pretty turn for phrase-making.

Though she was very far from ignorant, either of book-learning or of the world, she made no parade of knowledge; and though her good looks were undeniable, she neither emphasised their power nor traded on their possession. Her popularity was therefore due to an unusual combination of the virtue which commands our reverence with the wit and beauty which attract our admiration."

Her first famous conquest was her first husband. Victory over Scarron made it easy to control his friends. "If I had to choose," said one of the most scandalous frequenters of his house, "whether I would displease her or the Queen, it

would be the Queen." Scarron had "nothing save immortality," he said, "to offer her as a dowry." But not a single monument or tablet or inscription commemorates the burial of him whose widow became the virtual Queen of France, after having accepted the hospitality of Ninon de l'Enclos during the period of what even that rascally rake Bussy de Rabutin was moved to call "her glorious and irreproachable poverty." She had also the rare power of turning rejected suitors into lifelong friends, as well as convincing the most vitriolic calumniators of their mistake. "She is a prude," wrote Tallemant des Réaux, the inveterate scandal-monger, in genuine surprise, "although Villarceaux visits her."



303.—THE ENTRANCE GATEWAY.



Mme. de Sévigné gives evidence which is no less valuable on the same point. "She was most agreeable company, amiable and natural, dressed quietly but handsomely, as befitted one who spends her time with the best people." And on another occasion: "It is a pleasure to hear her talk. These conversations lead us far, from morality to Christianity, to politics, to philosophy." Yet when she left, the whole party went home with her "to the extreme end of the Faubourg St. Germain" without any of that feeling of relief from polished boredom which might have been expected nowadays. To anyone who ventured to remark on the signal favour soon shown her by the King she would point out, "My grandfather was first Gentleman of the Bedchamber of Henry IV. Is there anything remarkable in his descendant becoming lady-in-waiting to the daughter-in-law of Louis XIV?" Only a little further criticism was needed to produce her "seventeen degrees of nobility" from Geoffroi d'Aubigné in 1160. But she excelled all her ancestors, one may expect, in her love of approbation. "There was no trouble I would not take," she once wrote of herself, "in order to be well spoken of. I did not desire wealth, but esteem."

Another and even stronger motive in her life, and one which certainly had the most practical effect upon it, was her sincerely deep-seated belief in the mission laid upon her to



304.—THE NORTH FRONT.

reform the King. She did not hesitate to lecture him in plain terms (but, fortunately, in the "sweet, harmonious voice" we know) upon the frailties of his amorous past. And he liked it. He not only provided her with a pulpit, but he married the fair preacher. He even wrote, with his own Royal hand, before the final step was taken, "I cherish you always and consider you to a point

which I cannot express. In short, whatever friendship you have for me I have more for you, being with all my heart entirely your Louis." It seems an indubitable fact that she consented to the marriage not only because she refused all questionable unions and realised how much refusal grieved him, but also because she felt it her duty to supervise his reformation as his wife. She realised, with the cool, clear logic which characterised all her decisions, that she had chosen by far the most difficult task; and she faced it with conscientious thoroughness and immaculate correctitude. The Pope himself sent his congratulations.

No doubt, too, she was perfectly aware that since her own love, in the full acceptance of that term, was rarely—if ever—bestowed on anyone, she could not expect the feeling roused by herself in others to be much warmer than sincere esteem. "I wished," she writes again to her friends at St. Cyr, "I wished my name to be pronounced with admiration and respect, to be a personage, and to be approved by people of worth." She was probably as correct in this singularly detached appraisal of her own character as in her dispassionate estimate of other people; and if we did not know her real fondness for the simplicity of country life at Maintenon, or her true affection for her adopted children, we might be disposed to register a





305.—FROM THE NORTH-EAST.

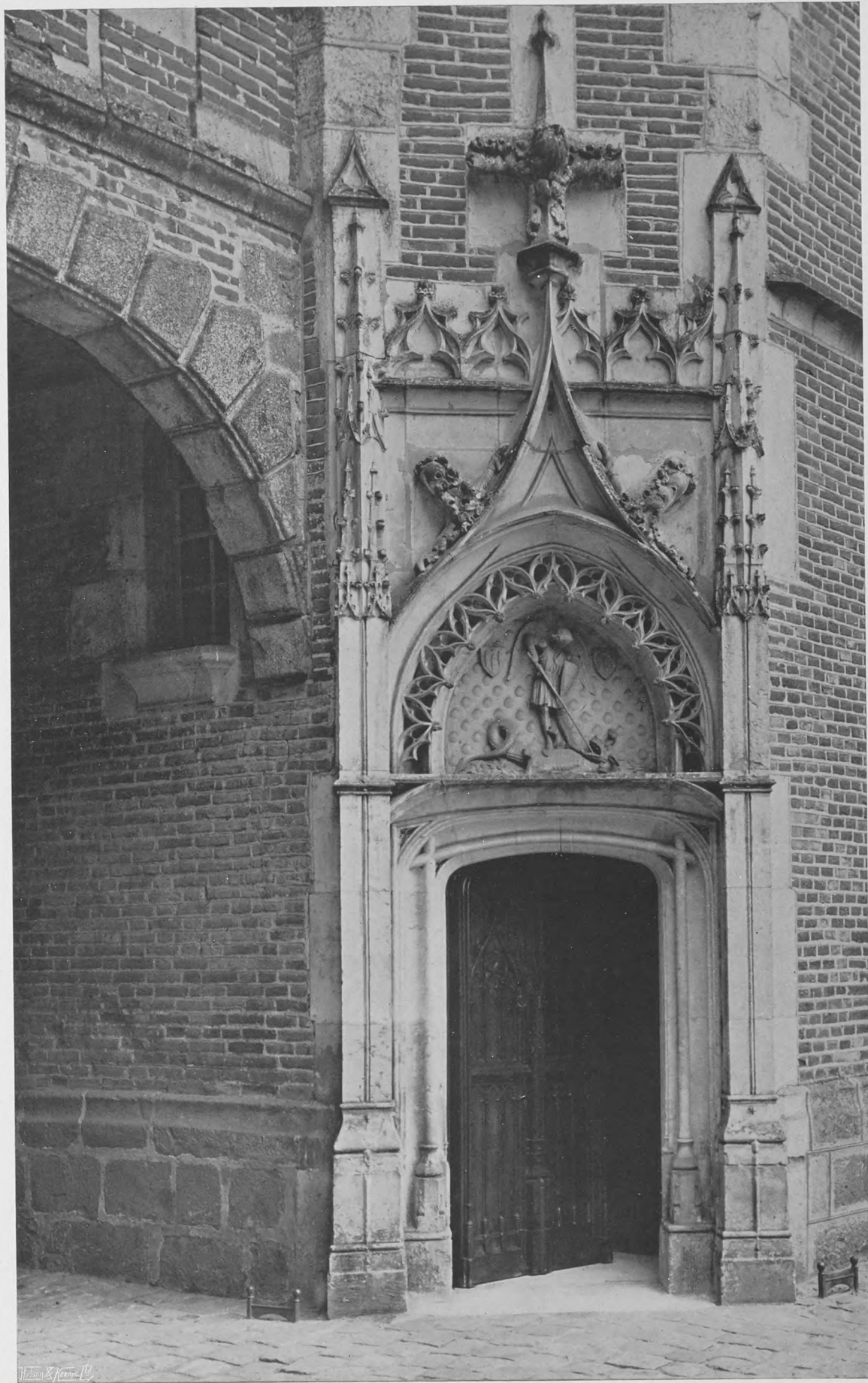
Thompson & Co. N.Y.



harsher verdict against the somewhat puritanical figure which might be seen at work upon her tapestry-frame even in the gorgeous recesses of the Royal coach. Her admirably businesslike arrangements, both for her poor relations and for the marriage of her niece, are but the reflection

of a coolly calculated respectability into which we can very seldom detect the admission of the least human passion; and almost the only romantic (and thoroughly unbusinesslike) detail to be discovered in her private life is her genuine attachment to Mary of Modena and the unfortunate Stewarts.

It is, I suspect, in the great institution of St. Cyr, which gave the benefits of the highest education to the orphan daughters of officers and the poor nobility, that the apotheosis of Mme. de Maintenon may most truly be discerned, for she was a glorified schoolmistress (though with "hair of a light chestnut" and "the most charming eyes") all her life, and her pupils ranged from orphan children to the King himself. She taught them, as they faithfully taught all pupils at St. Cyr, "first, the principles of



306.—THE STAIRCASE DOOR.

religion, then domestic economy, then reading, writing and arithmetic" (observe the order), "then Greek and Roman history, the history and law of France, geography and dancing," with such lesser arts as music, poetry and drawing thrown in at the end.





307.—ENTRANCE GATEWAY FROM THE SOUTH.



When the greatest of her pupils died, after she had shared and guided his life for thirty years, it was to St. Cyr that she turned naturally to end her own career amid the surroundings most congenial to her, and she died there with the hymns of her orphans in her ears, at the age of eighty-three, on April 15th, 1719. The Revolution tore her body from its grave in the chapel. In 1836 a slab of black marble was placed above its site with the words "Cy git Madame de Maintenon." Poor Scarron had scarcely less. By 1792 the National Assembly had ruined her foundation. But the marquise of Maintenon had been bestowed as a dowry upon her niece, the Duchesse de Noailles; in the possession of her descendants it remains her best monument. The old Maréchal Mouchy de Noailles was guillotined with his wife, and a little later the ladies representing three generations of the same family died on the scaffold on the same day.

At Maintenon, better even than at St. Cyr or Versailles, you may realise something of the

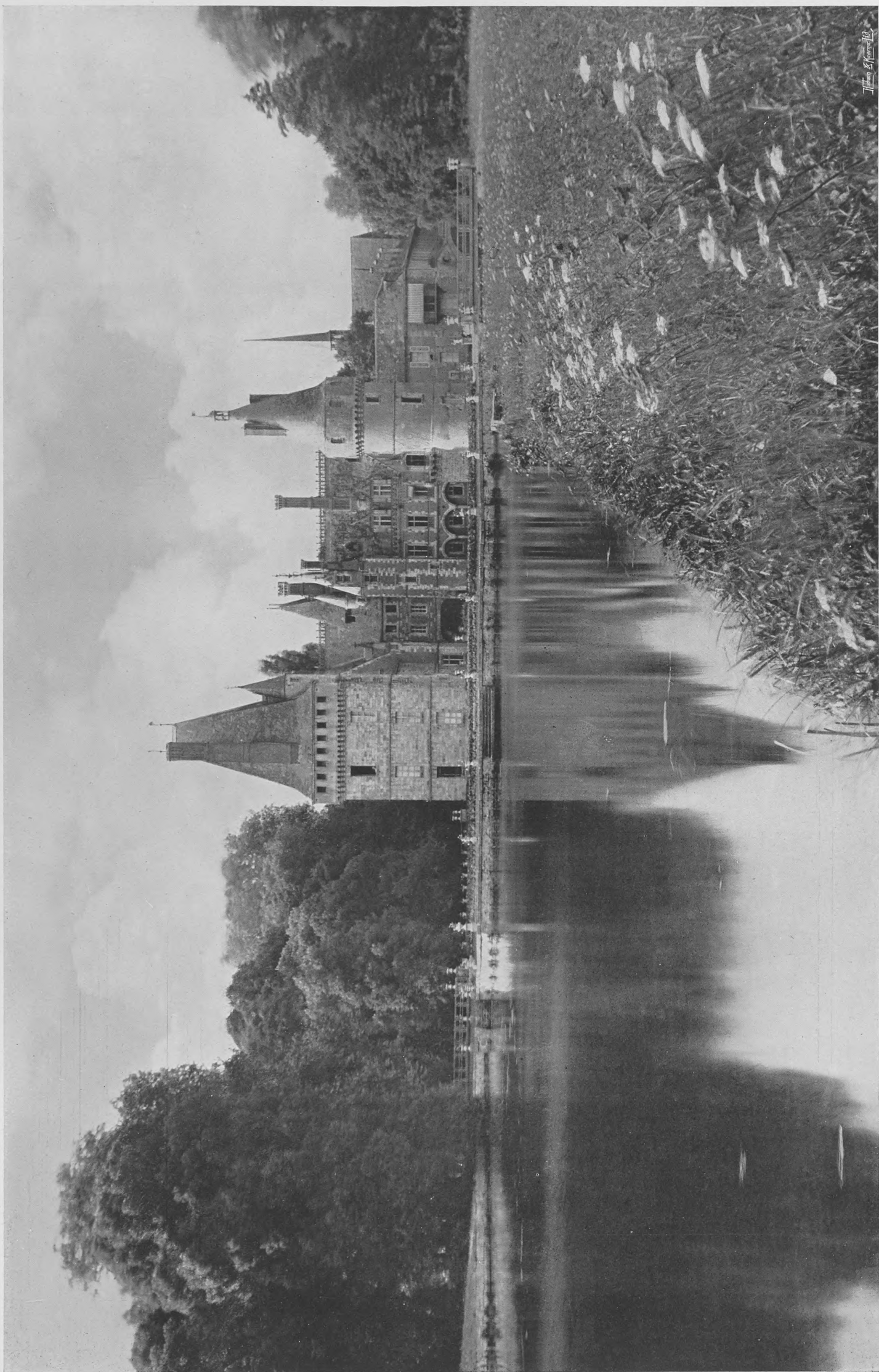


308.—STAIRCASE, TOWER DOOR AND PLACE OF OLD DRAWBRIDGE.

personality of its most celebrated owner among surroundings to which she was intimately attached. Her bedroom, with the almost Royal railing round the canopied bed, remains (I believe) exactly as it was when she slept in it and when it sheltered a far sadder, a much less wise visitor in Charles X on the night after his abdication. You reach it through a doorway set between twisted columns on the first landing of the beautiful staircase that is the best remnant of the Renaissance chateau.

In the fourteenth century Maintenon was a square Gothic fortress flanked by corner towers, with a square donjon, the whole protected by an enormous moat. Jean Cottereau, Minister of Finances to Louis XII and Francis I (and we know what builders these Treasurers were all over France), opened up the view into the park by pulling down one of the curtain walls, and enlarged and decorated the windows, making the same difference which may still be seen





309.—SOUTH ASPECT FROM THE RIVER.



between the inside and the outside of Josselin or in the continuous wing at Loches. The fortress, in fact, became a country house, strong indeed, and capable of defence, but frankly beautiful. In 1526 Mlle. Cottereau, the heiress, married Jacques d'Angennes, seigneur of Rambouillet, and his family sold it to the Marquis de Villeray, its last owner before Mme. de Maintenon. Madame herself left even more traces of her personal taste at Maintenon than had its former owners, for she built the right-hand wing which joins the old square donjon to the façade containing her own apartments, and she added the great gallery leading to the Collegiate Chapel founded by Cottereau in 1521.

The arms of Cottereau are set with the figure of St. Michael and the dragon above the door which opens on the main staircase to the left of the entrance. On its first landing is the old Salle des Gardes, now the dining-room, hung with fine Cordova leather and full of beautiful wood-carving. The modern salon was formerly the bedroom of Louis XIV, and it contains his portrait, together with those of Louis XIII, Henri IV and François I. In the little rotunda beyond is an exquisite statue of Henry of Navarre in youth and a



310.—THE SOUTH FRONT.

painting of Mme. de Maintenon at about the age of twenty-six. Other portraits of the Noailles family follow, and through the library you reach the magnificent gallery decorated by the father of the present Duke, to contain the historical pictures recording the most famous episodes with which his ancestors have been connected.

Returning to the main staircase, you may pass into the special apartments of Mme. de Maintenon, which I have already mentioned, with the work of Mignard and of Rigaud to recall its celebrated occupants. There is no doubt that a great deal of the beauty of the gardens, laid out by Le Nôtre, is due to her also, and full advantage has been taken of their unequalled position at the confluence of the Voise and Eure. The "Allée Racine" preserves the memory of the poet who came here at Madame's request to write *Esther* and *Athalie* for her beloved pupils at St. Cyr.

The stupendous arches of the ruined aqueduct dominate both these gardens and the park, and though they have no direct connection with Mme. de Maintenon, they still provide a vivid commentary on the character of the King she married; for they were built in order to carry



the waters of the Eure (from a point between Chartres and Maintenon) to the fountains of Louis XIV at Versailles. In 1665, thirty-six thousand men and six thousand horses were at work on Versailles alone, and whole regiments of infantry, who were not wanted at the front during a short period of peace, laboured at this aqueduct, the mortality being so great among them that cartloads of dead and dying had to be carried away every night, while no leave whatever was granted to the unfortunate officers who had to supervise among the unhealthy marshes these useless and enormous labours—useless because the efforts thus to advance the King's amusement in his fountains by a few years had to be suspended when war broke out in 1668, and were never again resumed. A more striking monument of fruitless and insensate recklessness does not exist in Europe. No wonder Saint Simon pours out his scorn upon the criminal prodigality of the monarch who could countenance such waste of life and treasure; and the businesslike compensation granted by Louis to Mme. de Maintenon for the disturbance created in her estate can scarcely have absolved him from the lecture he so richly deserved and, we may hope, received in full measure.

It is curious that what queens born in the purple could not accomplish, what the loveliest of his frail favourites could not achieve, was done so easily and naturally by Françoise d'Aubigné.

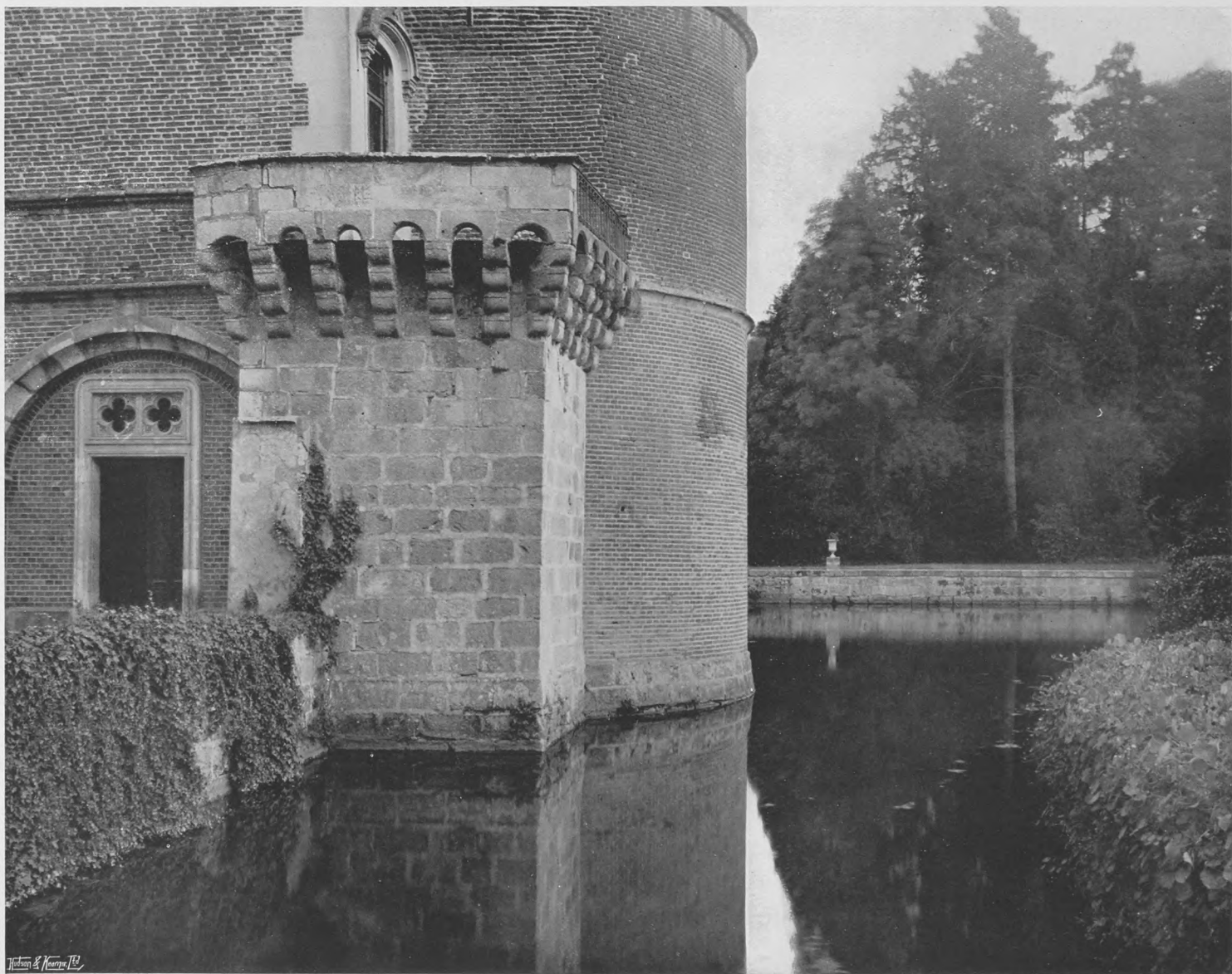


311.—ON THE EAST SIDE.



Even what has so far been sketched of her character does not explain the full strength of her influence over one of the proudest and most obstinate monarchs who ever breathed. A few more details are necessary.

She was born in November, 1638, in the precincts of the prison adjoining the Palais de Justice of Niort, and the registers of the church of Notre Dame in that town record that she was "baptised Françoise daughter of Messire Constant d'Aubigné, Seigneur d'Aubigné et de Surineau, and of Dame Jeanne de Cardilhac." Constant (or Constantine) d'Aubigné had been married before, but had killed his first wife with her lover on discovering her infidelity, and only his father's influence had saved him from paying the penalty. But his character was not of the best, as may be seen from the fact that after he had, in England, received an invitation from Charles I to his father with reference to an English expedition to La Rochelle, he betrayed the whole matter to Richelieu, and was rewarded with property confiscated from his father's estates. He was very naturally "disinherited" and disavowed forthwith by his indignant parent. Not very long afterwards a complication of charges, including coining and high treason, resulted in his being imprisoned in Château Trompette, Bordeaux. His second wife, Jeanne Cardilhac, was the daughter of the governor of the prison, whom he married in 1627. She accompanied him to the prisons of Poitiers and of Niort, to which he was in turn removed, and bore him two sons besides his famous daughter. Whether the melancholy atmosphere of such surroundings influenced both the mother and the children, we cannot speculate; but, at any rate, Françoise soon escaped from them, for Mme. Villette, her father's sister, took the girl and both boys away to the Château de Mursay, a house full of the memories of Françoise's famous grandfather, Théodore Agrippa d'Aubigné. If from her father she may have inherited her charm of manner and her good looks, there is little doubt that she owed enough of the deeper



312.—A CORNER OF THE MOAT.





313.—RUINS OF THE AQUEDUCT.

side of her character to the brave friend of Henri Quatre, the learned author of the *Universal History*, the ardent Protestant who fought so bravely for his faith and King with both his sword and pen. The sturdy, shrewd old warrior had been dead for eight years when Françoise d'Aubigné was born, but he had left the estates of Landes and Guinemar to the children of his unworthy son, her father. It was, therefore, without feeling the disgrace of receiving a mere charity that Françoise and her brothers could be taken in by their aunt. The Château de Mursay is to-day not very like what Théodore Agrippa left it; but you may still find traces of armorial bearings, of mythological frescoes, of such mottoes as that upon the staircase, "Il est difficile de s'élever." We may imagine that the little Françoise took them all to heart, and certainly she vanquished any "difficulties" in the way of her rise with conspicuous good fortune. Even for her comparative poverty (as she told the pupils of St. Cyr) she consoled herself with the thought that she was "a young lady," and she no doubt needed some such consolation, for her father remained in durance vile some years longer, and she was frequently taken in to see the prisoner. Not until after Richelieu had died in 1642 did Mazarin set him free, and three years afterwards he departed with all his family to the West Indies, as Governor of the Isle of Marie-Galante—a place he found so utterly unfit for anything except the hostile savages who dwelt there that he had to move on hastily to Martinique and take whatever small job was then vacant. It did not last long. "La Belle Indienne," as a title for his famous daughter, was more romantic than correct, and only emphasised the rarity of travel among the young ladies of her day; for she was back in France in 1647, and a little girl of nine can hardly have had the opportunity for many desperate adventures during the fifteen months or so of her unwelcome sojourn in the Tropics. She seems to have passed most of her time there in reading Plutarch's *Lives*, the only subject of subsequent conversation between her brothers and



herself permitted by a mother who kissed her twice in her whole life, and then on the forehead. In August of the year they returned her father died in Orange, where he had been gladly received by the Protestants who revered his parent's memory.

Françoise contentedly resumed her country life at Mursay, where she was known as "Bignette," alternately tending the turkeys and reading the somewhat vapid Georgics of Pybrac. But there was too much "heresy" in the house of Théodore Agrippa's daughter; and her mother had her taken away to a more Catholic atmosphere. She travelled to Paris with the assistance of a mule, which certainly was made to carry as much as any beast of burden I can remember. On its back in one basket were the provisions of the party, and in the other basket was little Françoise, to balance them. The driver sat in the middle between the two, and the litter, harnessed to the valiant quadruped behind, bore the matronly form of Mme. la Baronne de Neuillant, mother of the lady who had been one of her sponsors at her baptism in Niort. It was a curious way for her to reach the city of which she was to become so celebrated an inmate; and, as might have been expected from this queer method of travelling, she did not enjoy much luxury in her new home, and was soon (somewhat angrily) sent out of it to the convent of the



314.—PARK, RIVER AND AQUEDUCT.

Ursulines at Niort, whence she was once more returned to Paris to a convent of the same Order. There, after a thoroughly unhappy year, she was formally received into the Catholic Church, making the characteristic reservation that she must not be expected to believe her kind aunt, Mme. Villette, was to be damned for being a Protestant.

As soon as this was satisfactorily settled she moved again to a little lodging which her mother had taken in the Rue des Tournelles, and there did much needlework to help keep the little household together. Already the beauty and intelligence of the young girl had attracted the notice of her neighbours, and the gossip about their West Indian adventures somehow reached the ears of Scarron, who sent to ask their advice about the advantages of a warm climate for the rheumatic affection which had completely crippled him. The pair were fairly amazed at the brilliant society they met in the writer's salon; but Scarron himself was even more affected by the grace and attractiveness of the damsel, who probably only thought herself distinguished by being the worst-dressed lady in the room. He divined that the only choice before her at the time lay between a convent and a husband. He offered to be the husband, and those responsible for her future accepted him.



Her first trip after her wedding was to Amboise with Scarron, where he had some small estates. Their revenue enabled him to take the comfortable house in Paris (in the Marais) where he died six years later, leaving a beautiful widow of twenty-five, who cannot have improved a reputation that nobody could directly damage by choosing her first refuge with Ninon de l'Enclos. Ninon has left two well-known descriptions of her. The first was probably a trifle egotistical: "Elle fut trop gauche pour l'amour." The second is more profound: "She was virtuous by conviction as well as temperament. I wished to cure her, but she had too great a fear of God. Had she followed my advice she would have been happier, but she could not have gone so far."

Eventually the pension of her late husband was increased in her favour, and she withdrew to the Ursuline Convent in the Rue St. Jacques with her faithful maid Nanon; but she was often to be seen in the houses of those who had frequented Scarron's salon; and every year her reputation for wisdom, for beauty and for common-sense increased. She met all the best people of her time, and it is not surprising that on the death of Anne of Austria, to whom she owed her pension, the King renewed it (in February, 1666) by a brevet still preserved in the Château of Maintenon, which mentions the services rendered to the Crown by Théodore Agrippa d'Aubigné, her grandfather. In 1669 she was asked to undertake the care of the first child born to the King by Mme. de Montespan. Five other children of the same parents she devotedly cared for and educated. The step to educating and caring for their father does not now seem so long as it must have appeared when we saw the birth of the prisoner's baby in the Conciergerie of Niort.

The character of the woman whom the King so delighted to honour has also become a little more intelligible when we remember her Protestant ancestry, the penury (always so proudly borne) of her earlier days, the curious circumstances of her first marriage, the gradual and natural assertion of her personal superiority in all the various circles with which she came in contact, the final concentration of her varied talents upon the education and care, first of the King's children and then of the King himself. She took it all with admirable seriousness. Louis XIV adored being taken seriously. Everyone else in that flippant age was secretly flattered by the same attention. Nothing could possibly have succeeded better, and no such success could have been possible had it been the result of an astute anticipation of events. Mme. de Maintenon lived her own life if ever woman did. That it was narrower in some ways than that of most of her contemporaries was the result of natural predilection and inherited instincts. If it had broadened out into the seductive circles of a gaiety that in others too frequently degenerated into licentiousness, it would never have reached so high a level of achievement. Lived as she lived it, her whole career became a definite asset in the national welfare of her country.



## CHAPTER XXII.

## SERRANT, MAINE-ET-LOIRE.\*

ONE of the knights who fought with Godfrey de Bouillon in Palestine was Guy de la Trémouille. Another of that famous name fought for Charles VII with Jeanne d'Arc. A third defeated the Duke of Orleans (afterwards Louis XII) at St. Aubin du Cormier. To the days of the Revolution the holder of the title bore the Royal honours descending from Charlotte of Aragon, the Queen of Naples, and his eldest son is still known, for that reason, as the Prince of Taranto. Through his mother, Valentine, a descendant of those Walshes of Serrant whose ancestor came to France with the exiled Stewarts, and did his best to help the Stewart cause, the late Duke owned the castle of Serrant which is the subject of this paper ; and just before the publication of the facts which owe so much to his care of the priceless archives preserved at Thouars and in Paris, I had the melancholy duty of prefixing to an essay written long before his death the sincere expression of regret which every student of French history and every guest of France must have felt at the news that he had passed away in July, 1911.

He was the premier Duke of France by virtue of the Thouars title, and was a fine exponent of that Royalist devotion which he inherited even more strongly from his mother's side than from his father's, for he strangely repeated the vicissitudes of her ancestor's story when he served as a delegate on the celebrated mission to Frohsdorff with the late Duc de FitzJames.



315.—FRONT ASPECT FROM THE NORTH-WEST.

\* The Property of the Duc de la Trémouille.





316.—THE OLD BRIDGE FROM THE WEST.



His devotion to the best forms of sport was only equalled by his scholarship and generous support of historical research. His membership of the Institut was earned by the excellence of his own work ; but his preservation of the most complete set of private archives left in France, and his open-handed liberality in permitting the use of them to less fortunate students, were his chief titles to the gratitude of the historian. He married Mlle. Duchatel in 1862, and at his death his heir was Deputy for the Gironde.

It is neither with him, its latest owner, nor with that ill-starred family of de Brie, who lost the castle almost before they had finished building it, that I shall here chiefly deal. For, to my mind, the most interesting figure in the whole story of the place is that Antony Walsh of Castle Hoel in County Kilkenny who bought Serrant for his brother Francis, and died at St. Domingo. The boys were sons of Philip Walsh, who left England in 1688, after the retreat of James II, married another exile, Anne Whyte, at St. Malo, ten years afterwards, and died in 1708. His son Antony was ennobled by the Pretender in 1745, in Rome, for good and sufficient services to that desperate cause, and most of what is interesting that I have to say about him has been given me by a descendant of that same Irish family whose wife owned castles in France while he himself sat in the English House of Commons. But before the Walshes come upon the stage I must say just a word of introduction of their predecessors and the scenery that for so long formed a brilliant background to their wandering and vivacious spirits. Serrant stands, some ten miles from Angers, between the right bank of the Loire and the main road from Paris to Nantes. Facing this great national highway is set its principal façade, between two great wings which enclose the *cour d'honneur* with its pavilions at each angle. Ionic, Corinthian and Composite orders rise upon that stately front, one above the other. Two huge round towers of flintwork guard the further side of the main building, and each façade is embellished with a central pediment upheld by four caryatides. Within, the magnificent and monumental staircase shows the arms of Brie, Giffart, Surgères, Mathefelon, Maillé and Vassé, nobles who knew that vast estate long before Napoleon drove his straight road within a hundred yards of the front door, or the expresses on the Paris-Orleans line poured out their tourists at St. Georges-sur-Loire, amid the timbered fields, the hedges and ditches, which seem a constant reminder that Anjou and England once obeyed the same Plantagenets.

As so often happens in these ancient houses, the family of Brie, who built, in 1546, the castle that you see to-day, came into the property by marriage with the heiress, who held her fief from the du Bellays of Champtocé. Her son, Jean de Brie, fell fighting for King John against the English at Maupertuis in 1356. His great-grandson, Lord High Chamberlain to Charles VII, raised the siege of Compiègne against the same hereditary foe. Porthus de Brie, Chamberlain of Louis XI in the next generation, obtained leave to fortify Serrant, and perhaps the remnants of the moat he made may have been used in the magnificent expanses of water from which its walls still rise. The epitaphs of all the ladies of the house, from the middle of the fourteenth to the end of the fifteenth century, may be read in the church of St. Georges-sur-Loire, and you may there see the whole list at your leisure—Jeanne de Dreux, Perronelle Courtel, Jeanne de Coesme, Isabeau de Maillé, Anne de Mathefelon and others. It was the pride of Jean de Brie which brought about the downfall of the last of their lords and masters ; for on an ill-day in 1545 Jean began to build, and to build with a vengeance. The bills for Serrant ruined Jean de Brie. An injudicious lawsuit with no less a personage than the King's Attorney-General (accused of murder, it appears) completed the havoc of the unlucky owner's credit. In 1593 he died. After some sordid interchanges the lands were sold to Scipio Sardini ; and after a final and pathetic effort at recovery, the de Bries saw their last hope gone when the property was bought in 1607 by Hercule de Rohan, Duc de Montbazon, father of the notorious Duchesse de Chevreuse, of whom we heard somewhat at Montreuil-Bellay. But it seemed fated at first to stay for no long time in any hands, and in 1637 it passed on to Guillaume de Bautru.

The first Bautru who emerged from obscurity was a poor student of humble origin but nimble brains, who made his fortune by marrying the daughter of François de Bret, judge of the Provost's Court at Angers under Henry II. Their son rose to be Grand Counsellor, and bought lands at Louvaines and Porcher. Guillaume, the grandson, and purchaser of Serrant,



was apparently a licensed buffoon at the Courts of Louis XIII and Louis XIV, too rich to be deprived of valuable posts or even of responsible missions, but too cowardly to resent being made a public laughing-stock, and far too cunning to lose the valuable friendship of such men as the Maréchal d'Ancre, Richelieu and Mazarin. Richelieu even found it worth while to make him the first holder of the twelfth chair in the Academy. It would not be too much to say that his successors have been more worthy of that honour ever since. His chief duty seems to have been that of "Introducer of Ambassadors" to the French Court, and the title he assumed of "Comte de Serrant" was merely based on a clerical error in a letter from Louis XIV. He made his last joke on March 7th, 1655, and his son survived, wrapped in a prudently obscure respectability as Chancellor to the Duke of Orleans, till 1711, leaving a daughter, Marguerite, who had married her cousin, the only Bautru really entitled to distinction, that Marquis de Vau-  
 brun who was killed at the battle of Altenheim as he was bringing home the troops of Turenne after their famous leader's death. Describing the widow's distress, Mme. de Sévigné relates that "they gave Vau-brun a finer funeral than Turenne's at St. Denis, and she kept his heart with two candles always burning before it and stayed by it some seven hours at a time." She also ordered the splendid monument to his memory by Coy-  
 sevox, which you may see in the chapel added by Mansard to our château. The hero, mortally stricken, lies upon a martial trophy, at the point of death, resting upon one arm, while his fingers still retain the marshal's bâton. Beside him, on her knees, is the weeping figure of his wife, and Victory descends from heaven to place unfading laurels on his brow. The altar piece in this chapel, it may be noted, is an old copy of Raphael's *St. Michael*; but Murillo's *Virgin and Child*, originally here, was presented to Louis XV by the Comte de Serrant, and is now in the Louvre. The widow was left with a son, who entered Holy Orders, after leaving all his property to his sister, Madeleine Diane, widow of the Duc d'Estrées; and in her turn the Duchess sold the vast estates of



317.—GREAT ENTRANCE GATES.



Serrant, on June 29th, 1749, to Antony Walsh as trustee for his brother Francis, on whose behalf Serrant was officially created a "Comté" by Louis XV in 1755; and so we come to the "Walshes of Serrant," with whom I am chiefly concerned.

The Walshes were of good and ancient blood, descended from Philip Walsh, one of the thirty-three knights who accompanied Richard Strongbow, Earl of Pembroke, to Ireland, and obtained a grant of lands in 1174 in Kilkenny, where his son built Castle Hoel, the family seat until the confiscations of Oliver Cromwell in 1657. The James Walsh of that time, a captain in the Navy, took James II on board his ship in his escape to France, and his son, Philip Walsh, born in Dublin, settled in St. Malo and there married, in 1695, the daughter of James Whyte of Waterford, of the Clonmel family. Their son, Antony Walsh, the purchaser of Serrant, was baptised at St. Malo in January, 1703, and became a staunch supporter of the Chevalier de St. Georges and of his son Charles Edward. In June, 1745, Prince Charlie describes our man, to whom he had been introduced at Dunkirk by Walter Rutledge, as follows: "Walsh understands his business perfectly well and is an excellent seaman. He has offered to go with



318.—THE SOUTH ASPECT.

me himself, the vessel being his own that I go on board of. He has also got a Man-of-war that will go with me if she can be got ready in time and a frigate of sixty-four guns, which he took lately from the English and is manning, to be sent with all expedition."

It was Walsh who had had the somewhat perilous job of taking news in 1744 to the Prince's agent in London, Colonel Cecil, and reporting the position to d'Argenson, the French Foreign Minister. The next year he escorted the Prince to Scotland from Belleisle on board the Duteillay, Captain Darbé, in company with the Elizabeth, who had fought the British man-of-war Lion on the afternoon of July 20th, 1745, but was able to get the Duteillay safely through to the Scottish coast, where the Prince landed on August 16th, while Walsh sailed back in the Duteillay to Amsterdam, which he reached on September 3rd.

Louis XV, meanwhile, was not so idle, or so listless, as some of his critics have imagined, for in a despatch inherited by the Duc de la Trémouille, and published for the first time by Mr. Vivian Hussey Walsh in the *Anglo-Saxon Review* in 1900, it will be seen that Antony himself was proposed as commander-in-chief of a French expedition, in which a grand-nephew of the



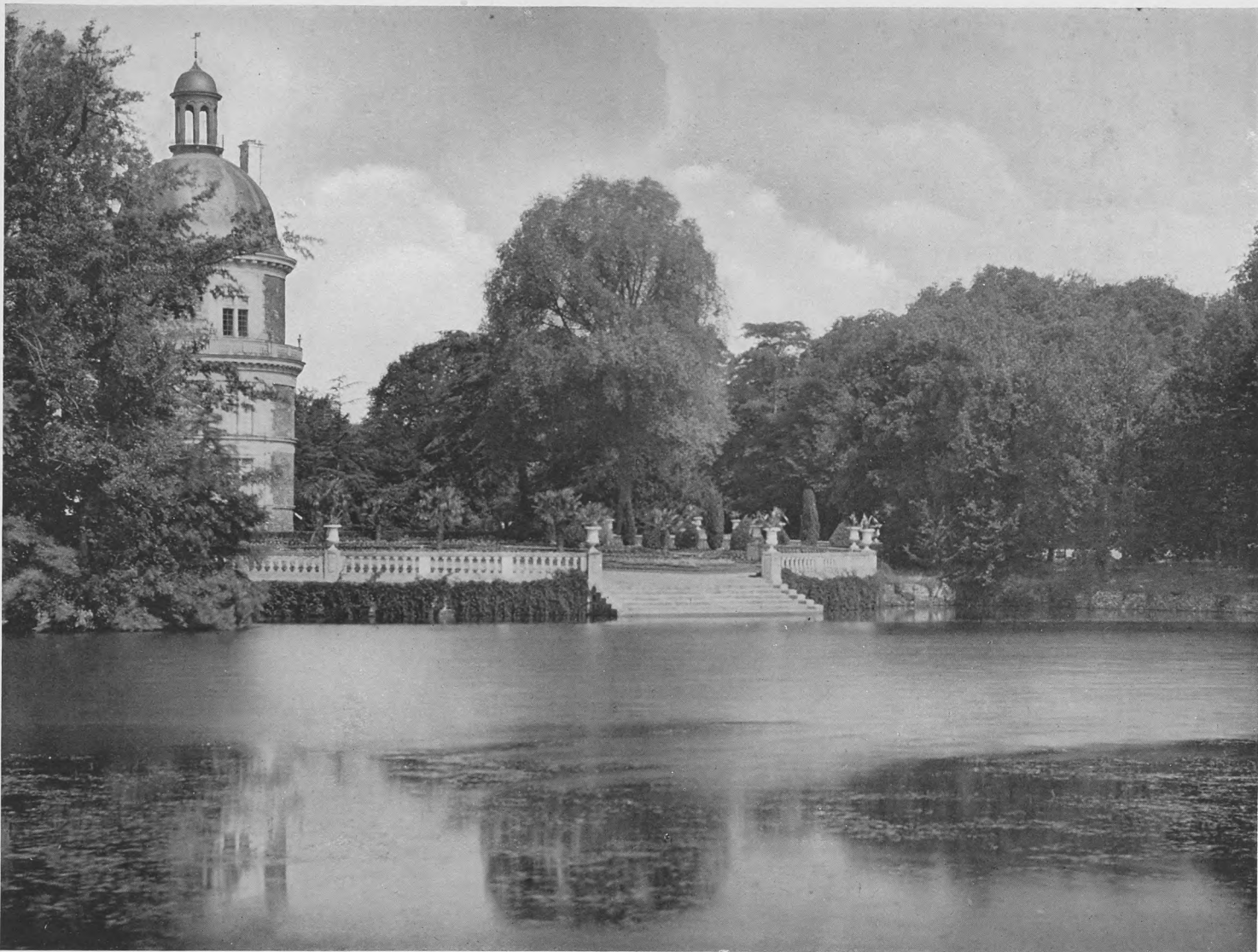
famous Jean Bart was suggested as one of his advisers. And since this despatch is still so little known, I reprint it here, with every acknowledgment, as an example of the curious byways in history which may be explored in the archives of the Duc de la Trémouille :

MEMOIRE DU ROY POUR SERVIR D'INSTRUCTION AU SIEUR WAILSH.

Sa Majesté ayant résolu de faire passer un Corps de troupes en Angleterre et ayant chargé le Sieur Wailsh de diriger les préparatifs qui ont rapport à l'embarquement et au transport des troupes dont il s'agit, Elle lui explique par la présente instruction quelles sont ses instructions sur les opérations qu'il doit faire en conséquence.

Le Sieur Wailsh doit être informé que le Sieur Charron, ordonnateur à Dunkerque a déjà reçu les ordres nécessaires tant pour faire calfater et carenner la plupart des bastiments marchands qui se trouvent dans les ports d'Ostende, de Dunkerque, de Calais, de Boulogne et de St. Valery-en-Somme que pour faire approvisionner 40 mille Rations de biscuits et de fromage par parties de 10 m. Rons dans chacun des quatre premiers ports cy-dessus.

Mais comme ces préparatifs sont généraux et qu'il en faut de plus particuliers, l'intention de Sa Mté est que le Sieur Wailsh après avoir pris connaissance des nombres des troupes et des quantités de baggages artillerie et munitions qui sont à transporter détermine la quantité des bastiments de chaque espèce, grands et petis qui seront nécessaires pour le transport. Il se rendra à cet effet à Boulogne, Calais et Dunkerque avec la plus grande diligence et il examinera les lieux la qualité et la capacité des bastiments qu'il y trouvera les plus propres pour l'objet en question, afin de régler ce qu'il luy en faudra dans chaque port.



319.—THE NORTH-EAST TOWER AND LAKE.

Les commissaires, commis aux classes et autres employés pour la police des ports de la coste ayant ordre de se conformer à ce que le Sieur Wailsh leur prescira, il leur remettra à chacun dans les différents ports l'estat des bastiments qu'il aura choisis soit pour embarquer des troupes, soit pour transporter l'artillerie les baggages, les chevaux, les armes, les munitions et autres attirails afin qu'ils puissent arrêter pour le service du Roy les bastiments en question et pourvoir pour leur equipement suivant leur destination.

Les nombres des batteaux propres au passage des troupes qui se trouveront dans les ports de Boulogne, Calais, Dunkerque et Ostende n'estant pas suffisants le Sieur Wailsh fera venir de Saint Valery-en-Somme et de Dieppe la quantité qu'il luy en faudra de surplus et Sa Majesté se remet a luy d'assembler ses batteaux dans un seul ou dans plusieurs des autres ports.

Le Roy n'a pas réglé si les bastiments de transport partiront de différent ports ou s'ils se rassemblent dans un seul pour en faire voile en mesme temps et Sa Majesté ordonne au Sieur Wailsh de prendre exacte connaissance de la position des ports, des vents, des marées et des autres circonstances concernant la navigation tant avec le Commandant des troupes qu'avec le Sieur Comte d'Aunay, le Sieur Bart et le Sieur Charron si on laissera les bastiments séparés ou si on les réunira. Le Sieur Wailsh aussitost qu'il aura esté pris un parti définitif à cet égard prendra les mesures les plus convenables pour que tous les bastiments soient prests aux endroits et pour le temps dont on sera convenu. Quoique le passage en Angleterre ne soit que de quelques heures et qu'il dust suffire d'embarquer de vivres dans chaque navire et batteau pour le retour de l'équipage Sa Mté estime qu'il est nécessaire qu'il y ait à bord du biscuit et du fromage pour deux ou trois jours à chaque homme afin que les troupes puissent estre nourries à bord des bastiments





320.—THE SOUTH FRONT AND MOAT.



sans en sortir, s'il arrivait qu'une fois embarqués les vents ou d'autres circonstances empêcheraient leur départ pendant quelques marées. D'ailleurs chaque soldat pourra prendre une ration ou deux de biscuit en se débarquant afin de pouvoir attendre le débarquement des vivres qui seront sur des bastiments séparés.

Le Sr Wailsh choisira quelques corsaires pour escorter le convoi et Sa Majesté s'en remet à lui d'en retenir pour cet objet le nombre qui lui paraîtra nécessaire. Elle prescrira au Sr Bart d'ordonner aux Capitaines corsaires de suivre les ordres qui leurs seront donnés par le Sr Wailsh qui leur remettra des signaux et une instruction détaillée sur ce qu'ils auront à faire. Quant aux dépenses que ce service exigera tant en frés de navires et de batteaux, solde des équipages et vivres qui seront à bord pour la traversée le Sr Charron continuera d'en prendre connaissance et expédiera les ordonnances de paiement en conséquence. Le Sr Wailsh lui fera part de toutes ses opérations afin qu'il n'y eut aucun retardement par le deffauts de paiements en ces parties. Les dépenses concernant les troupes tant avant leur débarquement qu'après leur débarquement, ainsi que tout l'attirail de guerre seront payés conformément aux ordres qui seront donnés par le secrétaire d'Etat ayant le Département de la guerre.

Sa M<sup>te</sup> attendra que tous les préparatifs de l'embarquement soient prêts pour donner les ordres nécessaires sur le lieu du débarquement. Elle compte au reste assez sur le zèle, l'activité et l'intelligence du Sieur Wailsh pour être persuadée qu'il finira en peu de temps les opérations dont il est chargé par la présente instruction et dont il rendra compte exactement au Secrétaire d'Etat ayant le Département de la Marine.

Faite à Fontainebleau le 16 9<sup>bre</sup> 1745.

Louis.

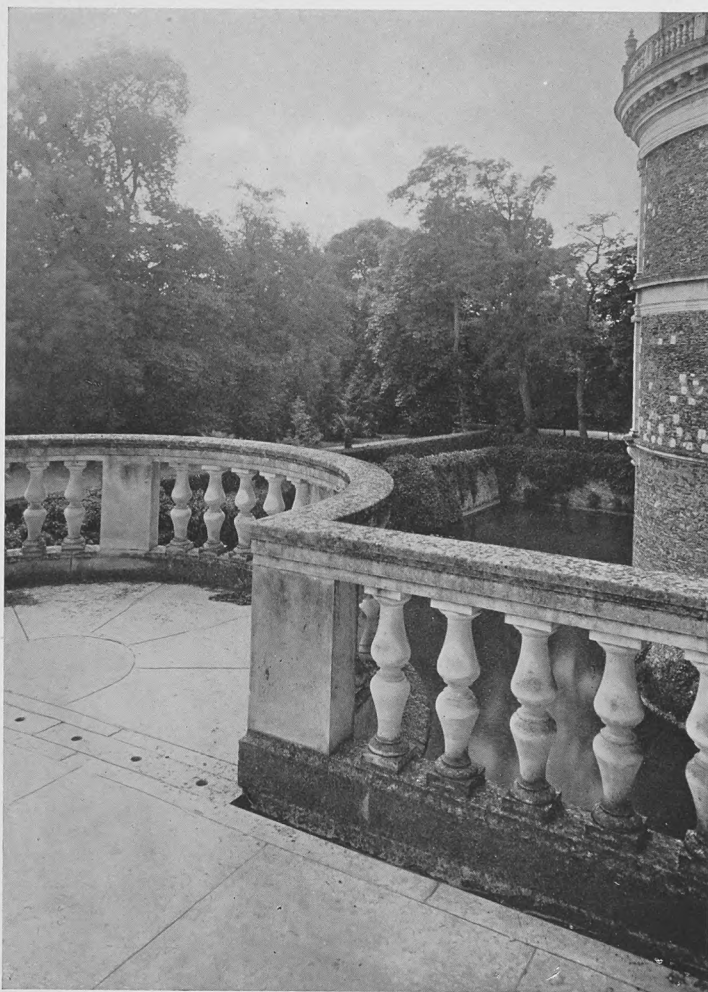
PHÉLIPPEAUX.

The events, of which the foregoing document is a singular survival, are commemorated at Serrant by the painting of Prince Charlie giving his instructions to Antony Walsh as his Ambassador to the Courts of France and Spain. The background evidently is meant to represent Highland scenery, and the Prince, wearing his tartan, is depicted about twice the size of his loyal, but less highly born, adherent.

By the end of March, 1746, final orders were issued from Versailles that the fleet was to sail under Antony's orders and obey him in every particular. But the news of Culloden, on April 16th, indefinitely postponed an invasion, the very rumour of which had already shut up the shops in London, compelled the Bank of England to combat a "run" by paying in sixpences, driven Newcastle well-nigh to his wits' end and compelled George II himself to prepare for a hurried departure. If Walsh's eighteen battalions of infantry and two squadrons of cavalry had landed before Culloden they would not only have silenced the Prince's own malcontents who counselled the retreat from Derby, but might easily have enabled the "5,000 Highlanders" to march successfully upon the capital itself. The Stewarts, at any rate, fully recognised that Antony had done his best, and by the Chevalier de St. Georges he was forthwith raised to the dignity of an Irish earldom.

Nor was his loyalty ever found wanting, for he was on one occasion a prisoner in the Tower, and was there informed that King George both respected and pardoned him. "Then the King," said he, "does more than the Almighty, for he pardons one who does not repent." Antony had married in 1741 Mary O'Shiell, daughter of a rich Irish exile at Nantes, and he died, as I have said, at St. Domingo, in 1763, leaving another Antony to bear the title of the second "Earl Walsh," who was prudent enough to marry his cousin, Marie, daughter of the first Comte de Serrant, in 1765. Their sixth son, the Vicomte Joseph Alexis Walsh, was the founder of the *Mode*, the organ of the elder Bourbons, and wrote various literary works of considerable merit, leaving a son, Edward, fourth "Earl Walsh," owner for a time of the famous château of Chaumont, on the Loire, who died, the last of his race, in February, 1884, and with him perished the last of the direct heirs of Antony.

But, as I have already mentioned, Antony had bought Serrant for his younger brother, Francis, who became the first Comte de Serrant in March, 1755, and left a son, Antony (a



321.—LOOKING INTO THE MOAT.



favourite name in the family), the colonel of the Walsh Regiment of the Irish Brigade. This Antony married, first, the daughter of the Marquis de Choiseul-Beaupré and, second, the daughter of the Marquis de Vaudreuil. After the Revolution, which had driven him to take service in the Irish Brigade, was over, Antony returned to the country he loved best, and was re-established in all his titles by Napoleon I under the Empire. In August, 1808, Napoleon and Josephine were travelling from Nantes to Paris just after the receipt of some particularly depressing news from the Peninsular campaign. Every preparation was made to give them a fitting welcome at Serrant, but the chief actors in the feast were so late in arriving that most of

the fêtes were over when Napoleon at last drove up to the château, at about eight in the evening, and went on to Angers after a visit of only two hours.

Antony's eldest son by his second wife married Sophie Legrand, daughter of the famous contractor; but Valentine, his daughter, made an even more important match, for she became the wife, in 1830, of the eighth Duc de la Trémouille, and their son, the ninth Duke (who died in 1911), inherited Serrant on the death of Ludovic, sixth Comte de Serrant, without issue in 1894.

I have perhaps sufficiently suggested in earlier pages the ancient and honourable record of the family of La Trémouille; but the archives of the house preserve the correct version of a well-known story, so interesting that I venture once more to quote from the pages already mentioned which we owe to Mr. V. Hussey Walsh. In this version, a parchment in the handwriting of the secretary to that Duc de la Trémouille who won the battle of St. Aubin du Cormier, it is stated that soon after Louis XII had come to the throne he sent for La Trémouille, and "of his own accord confirmed him in his offices and estates, praying him to be as faithful a servant to himself as he had been to his father." I must now give the original: "Et le Seigneur de La Trémouille se voulant excuser de ce qui s'estait passé, le Roy luy dist qu'il n'estait point memoratif des jeunesses du Duc d'Orléans." From the few quotations I have given, and from the late Duke's magnificent volumes, "*Les La Trémouille pendant cinq Siècles*," something of the value of the archives of his house may possibly be imagined



322.—THE SOUTH-WEST TOWER.

by those who know how many of such priceless collections have either been ruthlessly destroyed or ignorantly allowed to moulder into irremediable decay. After the Castle of Thouars had been given to the people of that town in the first half of the nineteenth century, these archives were transported in some score of ancient barrels and boxes to Serrant, and many of them have since been stored in the Duke's town house in Paris, where the majority still await that skilful analysis and publication which the *Ecole des Chartes* now renders possible throughout the length and breadth of France. Nor were the late Duke's services limited to the preservation of such records. Serrant itself owed much to his scholarly tastes and careful restoration by the



able hand of M. Lucien Magne, who restored, wherever the least traces were left, every scrap of the original design. The crossed G's which have puzzled many visitors record the fact that Guillaume de Bautru lengthened both wings in 1687. The southern tower and the left wing were built in 1636. Only the main building, the northern tower and the right wing were actually built by the original architect, and their superiority to the rest is manifest even to-day, especially in such details as the carved capitals of the pilasters.

I have mentioned the chief treasures of the chapel and the most famous picture in Serrant. The hall on the left of the ground-floor entrance is full of portraits of the Walsh family. On the right, in the dining-room, are seven splendid tapestries after Teniers finely set in Ionic pilasters of oak. The picture of Antony Walsh and Charles Edward is in the library, and it is the thing which lasts longest in the memory of every visitor to Serrant. "Semper et ubique fidelis."



## CHAPTER XXIII.

## VALENÇAY, INDRE.\*

“OLD Talleyrand at last is dead,” wrote Queen Victoria to the King of the Belgians in May, 1838. “I hear he showed wonderful composure and firmness to the last. He was one of those people who I thought never would die.” As long as Valençay stands, the memory of its most famous inhabitant will certainly never die, and it will be appropriate to reconsider the popular verdict on this much-misunderstood diplomatist beneath the shadow of the home he loved so well. Two years before the date of

the letter I have just quoted, Sir Robert and Lady Peel were staying at Valençay. They might, perhaps, have been able to modify the impression which the young Queen Victoria had obtained from Pozzo’s remark in London: “He said Talleyrand would not die yet, ‘parce que le Diable ne voulait pas l’avoir.’” That is a very fair reflection of the usual verdict. We shall see how far it was justified.

Valençay has the reputation, apparently justly founded, of being the largest inhabited house in France. Though within reach of the castles of the Loire, it is some distance to the south-east of the usual tourist track through Touraine, and stands in the picturesque plains of the Berry, on the borders of the region celebrated by George Sand. It was built for Jacques d’Etampes in 1540, and is considered by many to be one of the finest monuments of the Renaissance in France. By the reign of Louis XV Messire d’Etampes had become Marquis de Valençay; but in 1719 half the seigneurie was sold to John Law, the notorious Scottish



323.—ENTRANCE TO AVENUE.

\* The Property of the Duc de Talleyrand et Sagan.





324.—GENERAL VIEW OF CHATEAU.



financier, whose bankruptcy annulled the transaction. The d'Etampes family, however, finally lost it in 1745, though some of their survivors still claim the title of Marquis de Valençay. In 1766 it passed to M. de Villemorin, a "farmer-general," who bought the estate for six hundred and twenty thousand francs, and took the name of Luçay from a neighbouring parish. By him Valençay was sold in 1805 to Prince Talleyrand, who gave it in 1829 to his great-nephew, Napoleon Louis de Talleyrand-Périgord, on whom Charles X thereupon conferred the title of Duc de Valençay, which was the last Duché-Pairie created in France by the legitimate kings. The Duke died in March, 1898, and was succeeded in his titles by their present holder, born in 1832.

In his introduction to *France*, Mr. Bodley wrote, at the end of 1897: "The final touches were given to these pages in the library of the Château of Valençay, among the memorials collected by Talleyrand of each stage in the reconstruction of France, just as he had left them sixty years ago." Three months later the old Duke, to whom the property had been given in the lifetime of his illustrious relative, died, and a great change came over this historic place, for many of the treasures which then filled the château were sold by auction in Paris. The family of the present Duke purchased and put back a certain number of these invaluable relics, and, though the house is no longer as interesting as it was when the author of *France* was at work there, it is still full of memories of the great diplomatist and of the world he helped so skilfully to remodel in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Here, for instance, you may see the portraits of Frederick Augustus, King of Saxony, of Louis XVIII, Charles X and Louis Philippe, all given by themselves to Talleyrand. The portraits of Louis XIV and the "Grand Dauphin" left Valençay with the Spanish Princes (of whom more later), and were replaced by Titian's splendid portrait of Gonsalvo of Cordova and a fine painting of the Duke of Ferrara by Antonio Moro.

The history of the château was collated by the Duchesse de Dino (Princess of Courland in her own right), the favourite niece of Talleyrand, who married his nephew and became the mother of that owner of Valençay who died in 1898. In 1836, between Talleyrand's retirement from the Embassy in London and his death in 1838, this lady wrote a "Notice sur Valençay," and she relates that Napoleon, when he became Emperor, conceived the idea that his Foreign Secretary should have a magnificent château in which to entertain foreigners of distinction. Valençay was offered by M. de Luçay, who was in need of money, and in 1805 Talleyrand entered into possession; but his master did not allow him to enjoy it long in peace. In 1808 the Emperor, in order to fulfil his ambitious designs in Spain, decoyed the King and his family into France and decided to retain them there as prisoners. Charles IV was accordingly sent to Fontainebleau; but his son, proclaimed Ferdinand VII after his abdication, was sent to Valençay with his brother, Don Carlos, and their uncle, Don Antonio, there to remain till their return to Spain in 1814. After the Congress of Vienna and the battle of Waterloo, Talleyrand took up his residence at Valençay and commenced a careful restoration of the château, which he filled with a priceless collection of furniture and books. He also largely developed the estate, which he made his headquarters until his mission to England in 1830, and at Valençay in the Chapel of the Sisters of Charity his remains were buried some months after his death in Paris in 1838.

There are few other châteaux in France which exercise so magnetic an attraction when seen from a distance. Built on a plateau dominating the surrounding forests, the stately mass of Valençay is visible for miles round. Some critics have objected that the domed towers, which are its peculiar characteristic, are not in keeping with the ornate donjon; but the complete effect is superb. The chief entrance is by an avenue through the forest of Gatine, and you traverse two vast courtyards before reaching the great donjon, a fitting centre for an estate which, until the death of the late Duke, extended for fifty thousand acres, a large area even for England, but unparalleled in France. But in all its history of three centuries and a half one figure stands out pre-eminent in interest—the man whom Carlyle thought "one of the strangest things ever seen, or like to be seen, an enigma for future ages," whom Mme. de Staël describes as "the most impenetrable and most inexplicable of men," the cripple with the deep voice, the mask-like face and flashing eyes, who passed from the old *régime* of the clergy and the nobility to the



chaos of the Revolution, from the Directorate to Napoleon, from Napoleon to the Restoration, from the Bourbons to the Orleanists, and made fresh legends—and fresh enemies—at every step. Perhaps in the shadow of his own towers, in the rooms where the best of his last years were spent, we may get a little nearer to the truth of this enigma than his contemporaries ever penetrated. I have no desire to “whitewash” Talleyrand. The facts of his career are sufficient. We know more of them than any of his nineteenth century critics did. The details published by M. de Lacombe in France and Mr. McCabe in England have alone made the old views of him untenable any longer.

“Taille rangs,” or Talleyrand, is an inspiring name for a soldier; but I find as little to admire in the Lieutenant-General de Talleyrand-Périgord, who was the diplomatist’s father, as in the daughter of the Marquis d’Antigny who bore him. The only week he ever spent with her was the week after his birth in Paris in 1754. She put him out to nurse, and he was crippled for life by falling off a piece of furniture and injuring his little foot. She did her best to cripple the rest of him by cutting off the inheritance that should have been his on his elder brother’s death, and forcing him into the Church without the least consideration for his fitness for it or his predilections. One of his grandmothers was the famous Princesse des Ursins. The Princesse de Chalais, the great-grandmother with whom the little boy of four stayed till he was eight, seems to be the only womanly influence his childhood ever enjoyed. He struggled through small-pox alone. He struggled through the Collège d’Harcourt without a single ray of sympathy. At thirteen he was forced into the *soutane*, and began to consider an ecclesiastical career, in which



325.—THE COURTYARD.

Cardinal de Rohan (the hero of the Diamond Necklace), Loménie de Brienne and Dillon were the leading lights. His repugnance took the form of a cynical, silent self-repression, that left its mark on all his subsequent career. He was “dipped in the waters of the Styx,” as he said afterwards. In 1774 he was sustaining a thesis at the Sorbonne. When he was in minor orders at Rheims he saw the coronation of Louis XVI, in which some of his relatives bore a prominent part. Other interests were not neglected. He had “made love under an umbrella” by the time he was eighteen. It was not long before he had met the Duchesse de Luynes, the Duchesse de Saint James, the Vicomtesse de Laval. In their salons the tender art did not lack encouraging surroundings. I imagine him with something of the temperament of Wilkes: “Give me half-an-hour’s start and I fear no rival with a woman.” But this was a trait that never became notorious. Like “Old Q” across the Channel, Talleyrand had too much hard common-sense to let women wreck his prospects. His passions never dominated him; he controlled them by his intellect. Even his gambling, in those early days, contributed largely to a slender income. All this does not sound very sacerdotal, yet it was not wholly the result of open cynicism. It was with the deepest reluctance that he was ordained, because, after his parents’ treatment, he



realised the Church was his only chance of a career. The Abbé de Périgord was the typical Churchman of 1778; no more, but certainly no less. During the day he took little beyond a cup of chocolate or a biscuit with a glass of Madeira. But his wine, his coffee and his cooking were most carefully chosen for dinner, and his evenings were among the best in Paris; for he was a born epicurean, and in that faith he died. His common-sense extended even to those practical politics of the Church which contemporary Churchmen were the last to understand or alleviate. He helped the poor clergy; he gave Breton widows the right to marry again. If he was shrewd in his own affairs, he was wise and foreseeing in those of his neighbours. By degrees his real talents became more widely appreciated. At Rheims they had been observed by such Englishmen as Pitt, Elliot and Wilberforce; in Paris by such women as Mme. de Staël. Elected as a Deputy of the clergy of his diocese of Autun, he soon made his mark in politics. He was in the Assembly when the Bastille was stormed, and to a capital wild with the rejoicings of the people at their victory he brought (we may imagine with what feelings) the tidings of the King's promises. On the night of the 29th of that July his uncle's château was burnt to the

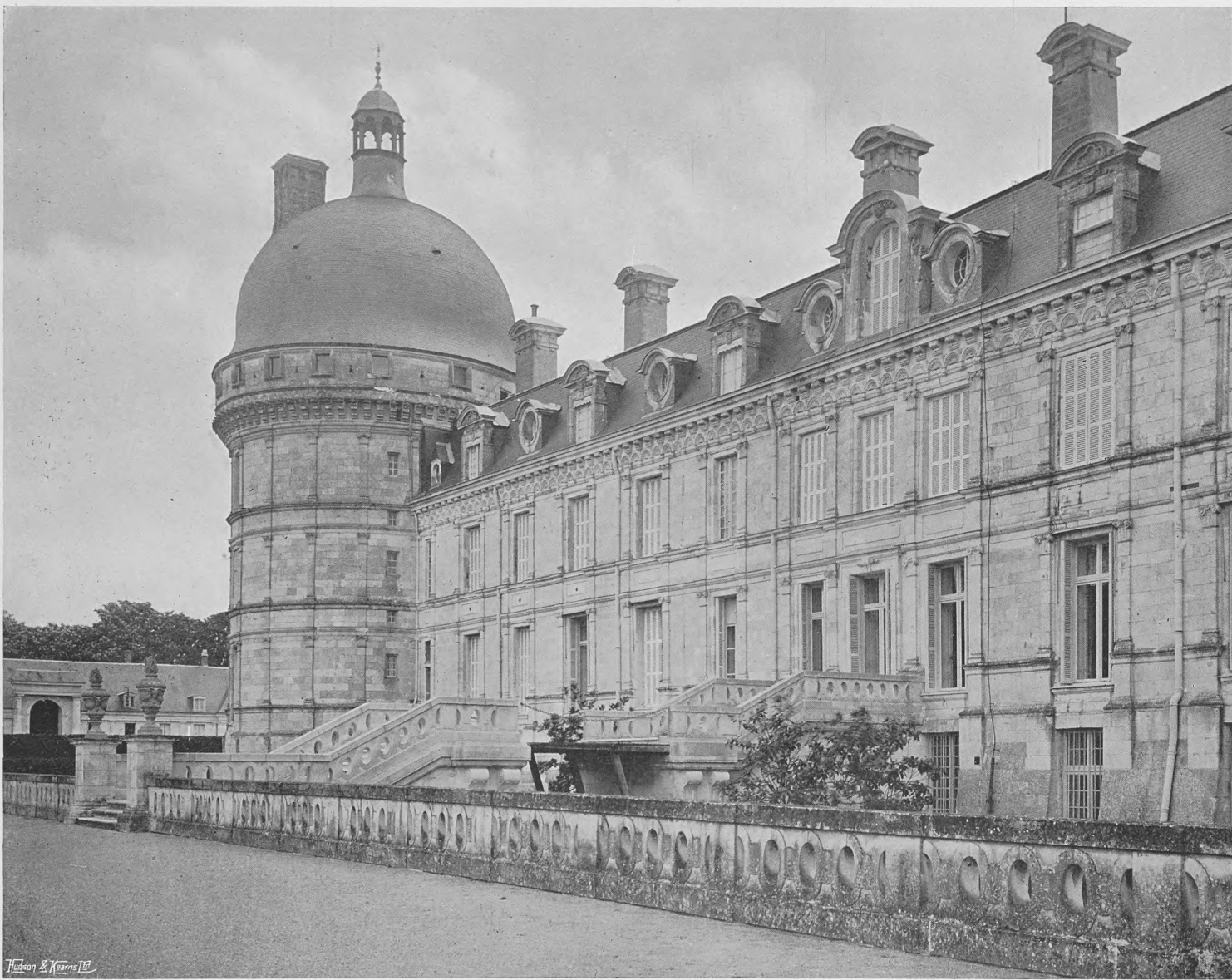


326.—FROM THE GARDENS.

ground. By the following January he had resigned his See of Autun, and was elected a member of the administrative council of the "Department of Paris." It is, perhaps, unfortunate that the famous "Messe du Champs de Mars," at the celebration of the first anniversary of July 14th, had preceded that inevitable renunciation; but to his mind the mass had been inevitable too. "Provided I remained a Frenchman I was prepared for anything," he wrote. It must, indeed, have needed a somewhat pliable intelligence to pass through times like those. We may to some extent reconstruct his philosophy at that time and subsequently. The nation was in the melting-pot of Fate; but he believed that as a nation it was indestructible. He abhorred hasty and unjust measures. He felt himself capable of wise and legitimate reform. The ideas for which others were prepared to die seemed to him to have outlived their usefulness. Had he not been convinced of this, he would have thought very little of dying for them too; but he saw that a possible future might be achieved with greater likelihood if he assisted in directing events in the right channels. So he survived in order to direct them. He saw no harm in



benefiting as much as other people did from the process of benevolent direction. His deliberate, low-toned voice was ever raised in support of justice, of humanity, of moderation ; his lucid and convincing phrases won their way above the squeals and bellows of his blatant fellow-revolutionaries. Good taste was one of his essential ideals ; and when he saw signs of its complete decay in France, he left his country for his country's good and became Ambassador in London. England expected sulphurous lightnings from the volcano he had left behind. The society of Saint James's was astonished to find instead a pale, sedate, even stolid-looking person, who barely raised his voice and rarely spoke ; who had Theories of Education on the brain—theories which our twentieth century is only just beginning to realise ; who quickly understood that, as a nation, we were not ready to be diverted from commerce into politics, and that we only asked to be left alone.



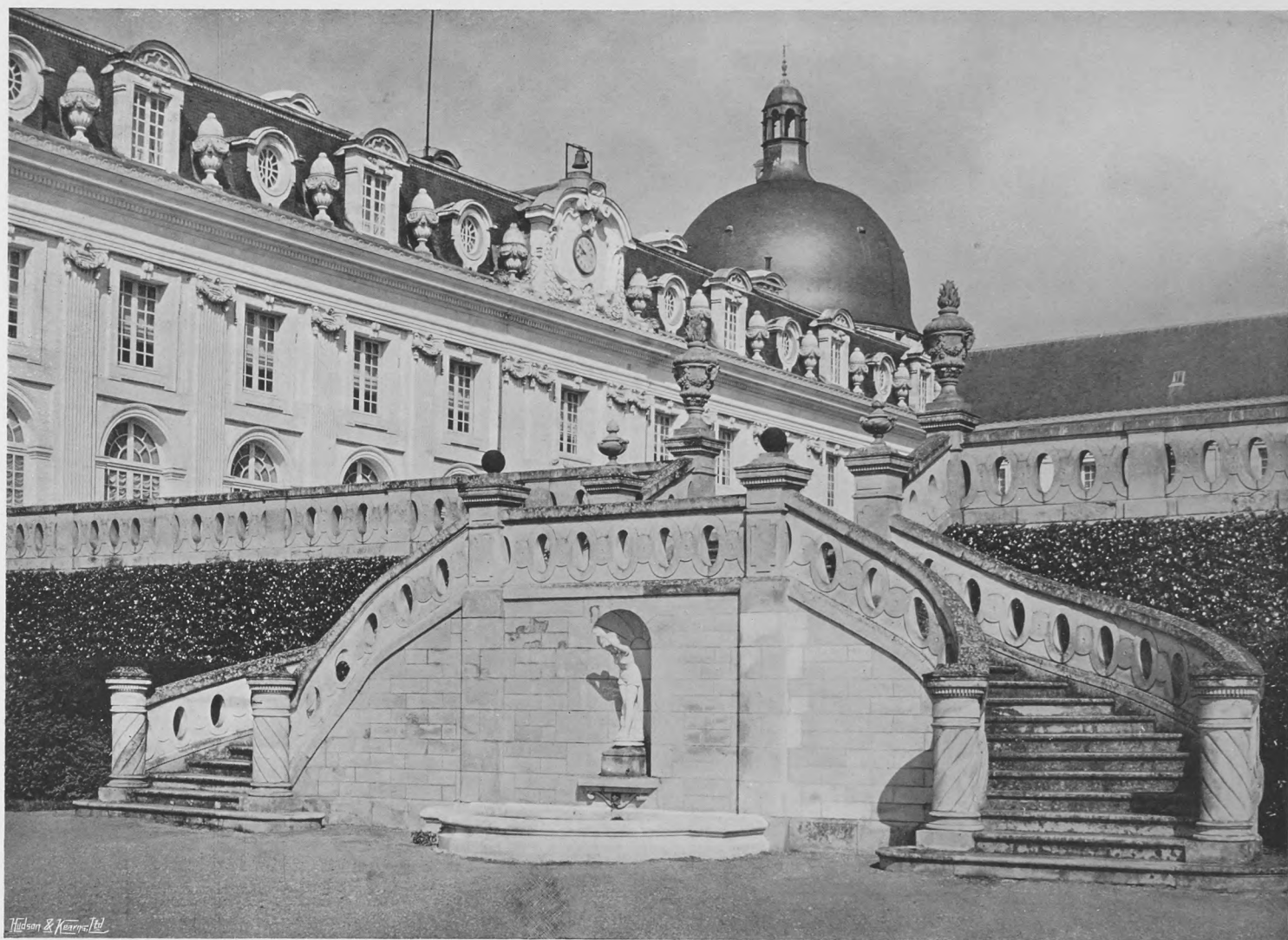
327.—THE DRAWBRIDGE : GARDEN ENTRANCE.

He was back in Paris when the Tuileries were stormed, and the Royal Family taken prisoners to the Temple ; but the September massacres were too much for him. Under the pretext of persuading England to adopt the Metric System he left France with a passport from Danton, and returned to London to enjoy his library in peace and quiet. It was sold at Sotheby's in 1793 for over two thousand pounds. He was not entirely deprived of the conversation of his compatriots, for the Comtesse de la Châtre was in Kensington, Mme. de Genlis was in town, Mme. de Staël lived out at Richmond. Fox, Sheridan and Lord Lansdowne were often in his rooms. He does not sound like a dangerous inhabitant. But he was disliked as an unfrocked bishop, and denounced as an emissary of the Jacobins ; so early in 1794 he was peremptorily given five days to leave the country. He sailed for America, and in Philadelphia he much enjoyed the society of Alexander Hamilton. But he found his new home "a country without



a past," and he was uneasy in it. Even a visit to Mount Desert did not move him. He became seriously dissatisfied with "a country of thirty-two religions and only one sauce." Early in 1796 his name was removed from the list of *émigrés* and he returned to Europe. With his usual caution he had a good look at France from a distance before crossing her borders. But after some preliminary enquiries at Hamburg he re-entered Paris in September, 1796, a Paris which must have aroused feelings that—in such a man—may be more easily imagined than described.

Whatever else Talleyrand may have been, he was never a hypocrite, and he rarely concealed (when there was no harm in revealing them) his opinions about either himself or others. "I don't know why people dislike me," said a man in his hearing; "I have only done one wrong thing in my life." "When will it be over?" asked Talleyrand. "Siéyès is deep," said another. "You mean hollow," he corrected instantly. People soon grew to be careful what they said before this faultlessly dressed, quietly authoritative person who seemed to consider what went



328.—STAIRCASE FROM GARDEN.

on from an entirely detached point of view, and yet silently imposed a standard on which he never openly insisted. At every turn his deep sense of humour, his strong sympathy with humanity, must have been inflamed by the Paris of 1796. He suggested a criticism of the ladies' toilets by sending one of them a figleaf. But in a year the charms of another had led him finally into captivity. No doubt the late mistress of Sir Philip Francis was a most attractive woman. But it was Napoleon who made her Mme. de Talleyrand. They made the best of it till, twelve years afterwards, she became infatuated with the royal Spanish visitor at Valençay. Her husband had never exaggerated her intellectual claims. "A woman of intelligence often compromises her husband; without it, she can only compromise herself." Though he was capable of curling up her hair in thousand-franc notes at the Hôtel Galiffet, he never allowed her to interfere with his own doings. After Mme. de Staël had aided him to get the post of Minister of "Exterior Relations" in 1797, he never attempted either to sell his country's





329.—THE CLOISTERED CORRIDOR.



interests or to endanger the peace of Europe for selfish reasons. But he was not above feathering his own nest in exactly the same way that his contemporaries—English or foreign—feathered theirs.

Something of a kindred genius each man must have discerned in the other when Napoleon constantly called Talleyrand to the Luxembourg on questions of foreign policy. Save Fouché, the First Consul needed no civilian more in 1799. Between them they were to change the map of Europe; for Talleyrand believed in benevolent despotism, not in revolution, and he supported Napoleon until every pretext of benevolence had been swept aside. It was Napoleon, not Talleyrand, who murdered the Duc d'Enghien. Their conversations must have been a relief after the dry details of other Ministers. "Some say George III is dead," said Talleyrand, "others, not. I believe neither." Another time he was informed that "pékin" was the soldier's phrase for all that was not military. "I see. Just as we call 'military' all that is not civil." A peculiarly plain person was once boring the company by expatiating on his mother's

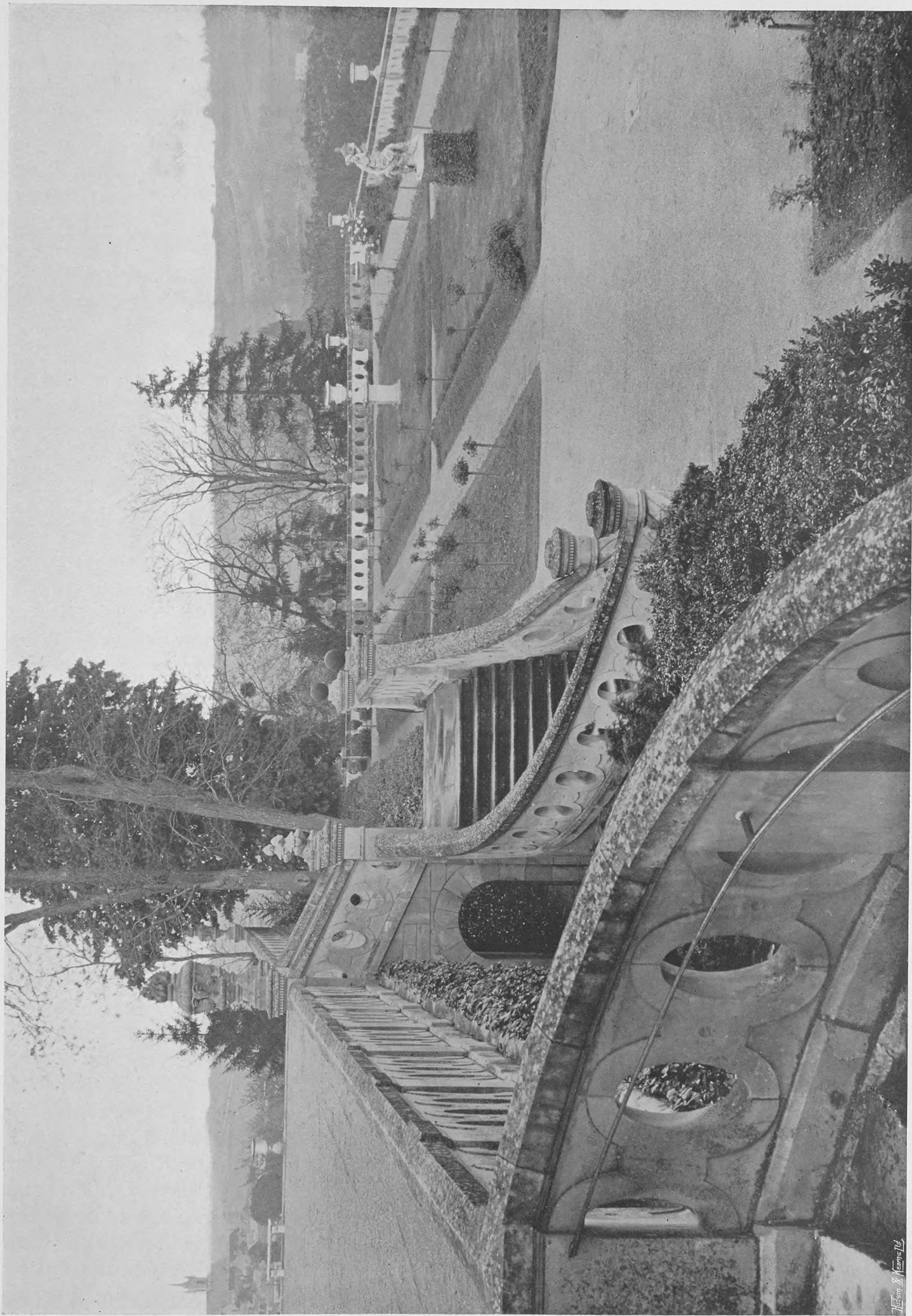
beauty. "Ah," interposed Talleyrand, "it was your father, then, who did not quite reach the usual standard of good looks." Someone asked him what had passed at the last committee meeting. He looked quietly at the impertinent enquirer, and replied in a solemn voice: "Three hours." When Napoleon made himself Emperor in 1804, it was naturally Talleyrand who became Grand Chamberlain of the Empire, and who directed the organisation of the new Court. But he was not invariably in agreement with his master. England had declared war the year before, much to Talleyrand's annoyance and regret. He had no sympathy with inflated ideas about exaggerated empire. But Napoleon was quite mistaken in imagining his sagacity and sound common-sense to be merely puling humanitarianism. That was a weakness in which Talleyrand never indulged. On the whole, however, they got on excellently, because each recognised, for a time, an appropriate instrument in the other. Talleyrand's salary was twenty thousand pounds a year, to which Napoleon added the papal fief of Benevento, and the Foreign Minister was not ungrateful. He actually organised the supplies for the whole Imperial army at a critical point in one campaign. Once he remained immovable in his chair the whole night



330.—GARDEN STATUARY AT VALENCAY.

because Napoleon, exhausted with his work, had fallen asleep as they were talking. But in 1807 Napoleon "dropped his pilot," with a sufficiently graceful recognition of his services, and forged ahead alone upon the rocks of Russia. Talleyrand had flatly refused to serve mere naked personal ambition. But even in his retirement at Valençay, the Emperor found a use for him, and sent him the Spanish Princes to take care of, at a fee of three thousand pounds a year. They cannot have been very congenial guests. They possessed scarcely a single accomplishment that could have recommended them to their distinguished châtelain. Talleyrand was once gratified to hear that Don Antonio had been observed in the library; his feelings, however, underwent a change when he discovered that the pious uncle had been cutting the illustrations out of valuable old editions in order to protect the morals of his nephews. They were lodged in the room now called "La Chambre de M. de Talleyrand," in which are pictures by Titian, Rembrandt, Holbein, Mignard and Le Brun. The dozens of wolf-traps they made were





331.—THE GARDENS FROM THE TERRACE.



preserved there till a few years ago. The stages with flower-pots full of Spanish plants had been previously removed. They watered them copiously night and morning, which must have been trying for the tapestry and hangings. At the end of six years' stay they scarcely left a bit of furniture intact. Their ancient chariot, incapable of recrossing the Pyrenees, was for long years afterwards exhibited at Valençay. But Talleyrand always insisted that they should be treated as Princes of the Blood, and tried himself to teach them to shoot, to ride, even to read. He reprimanded the commander of the military guard for being too officious. He allowed them to address Napoleon as "Mon Cousin." The Emperor angrily directed that they should write to him as "Sire" in future. "Ajaccio and St. Helena dispense with comment," said Talleyrand afterwards, in referring to the episode. When their kindly host, who could be so bitter when he chose, was compelled to leave them in 1808, they wept at parting and gave him their old Prayer-books as keepsakes.

In the autumn of 1808, Erfurt was full of those "shadows of dominion, splendour and catastrophe," the forty dukes and monarchs of Europe who had gathered for the meeting of the



332.—ON THE UPPER TERRACE.

Czar Alexander with Napoleon. Perhaps the greatest man there was Goethe. Talleyrand was there, too; but he had never relaxed the clear distinction in his mind and heart between the national interests of France and the personal ambitions of Napoleon. "France," he told the Czar, "is civilised, but her ruler is not. The Russian monarch is civilised, but his people are not." The little rift widened inevitably. "Spain was unlucky for both of us," had said Napoleon when he heard stories of Talleyrand's wife and the Princes at Valençay. When both were back in Paris, after Erfurt, "You did not tell me," said Napoleon again, "that the Duke of San Carlos was your wife's lover." "I did not think," replied the husband, "that it redounded either to your Majesty's honour or mine." Spain was indeed Napoleon's evil star. For the next four years Wellesley's troops were fighting through the Peninsula and preparing the final coalition. Talleyrand, powerless to interfere, left Napoleon to his inevitable doom and withdrew into the country on his salary as Vice-Grand Elector. He had pensioned his



mother lavishly until her death. He lost enormous sums in 1812. So he sold Napoleon the Hôtel Monaco in Paris for two million francs and took another house instead in payment of a private debt from the Spanish Ambassador. Slowly but relentlessly the doom which Talleyrand had foreseen pressed heavily upon the Emperor. In December, 1812, Napoleon had returned from Moscow. In November, 1813, he returned from Leipzig. Between these fatal dates occurred his last interview with Talleyrand. "You are a coward, a traitor and a thief!" he shouted. "You don't even believe in God. You have betrayed and deceived everybody. You would sell your own father." Not a muscle of Talleyrand's face or body moved as he stood quietly by the fire under the storm of Corsican invective. He probably deplored its bad taste inwardly, but he appeared to be the last person interested in what was being said. He wrote sadly and very moderately about it to his beloved Duchess of Courland, and he took it at its true value. In the next March he was receiving the Czar of Russia, the King of Prussia and others in Paris. He then restored the Bourbon monarchy with Louis XVIII. When Napoleon heard the news, he said: "Talleyrand was a good servant. I made the mistake of treating him badly without making him powerless." Unfortunately, though Talleyrand knew Napoleon, he did not know Louis XVIII, or his courtiers, of whom he said later, "Well, the geese saved the Capitol." He soon realised the calibre of their wives. "That is a very short skirt," he smiled to one of them, "in which to take an oath of fidelity." To Louis himself he only observed, "This is my thirteenth Oath of

Loyalty, Sire; I trust it will be my last." He can scarcely have dreamt that yet another would be given to Louis Philippe. One of the mightiest visitors to Paris, Wellington, was Talleyrand's sincere admirer; and the diplomatist soon proved his worth to others by his masterly conduct of the Congress of Vienna, where he got not only the laughs but the thinkers on his side as well. His ideals of "peace, justice, France and humanity" have often been sneered at by those who did not know the facts. But they achieved the maintenance of the kingdom of Saxony as well as the restoration of Naples to the Bourbons, and no single Minister at the Congress achieved so much. Before its deliberations were over Napoleon had sailed from Elba; Talleyrand, however, stayed by his work until the



333.—THE VESTIBULE.



Act was signed, after Louis XVIII had fled to Belgium, leaving all his Minister's confidential documents behind. When Talleyrand reached Brussels, Waterloo had been fought and won, and by Wellington's advice he joined Louis at Cambrai. But the situation had become impossible, and he withdrew to Valençay with his High Chamberlain's salary of four thousand pounds a year. It is at this point that Talleyrand's Memoirs close. He began to write them at Valençay in 1816, and finished them in the last three years of his life. They were only published in 1891, and they revealed singularly few diplomatic secrets.

After 1815 Mme. de Talleyrand lived in England on the pension of sixty thousand francs which he allowed her till her death in Paris in 1835. His cherished companion at Valençay was the wife of that nephew to whom he had assigned the Duchy of Dino, awarded him by Ferdinand. Her mother was his old and valued friend the Duchess of Courland, and her little daughter Pauline was with him to the end. Some eight years he spent with them at Valençay. Most men would have considered them the well-earned rest after a full life of labours and vicissitudes. Talleyrand knew better. He was only waiting. But before the last call came, and the curtain fell, he showed that he could wait as gracefully as he had done all else. The temperance and good taste of his epicureanism had left him with good health when most of his contemporaries were broken men. His long white hair was carefully powdered and curled. Out of a face as waxen as a death-mask his grey eyes still flashed beneath their shaggy brows; his voice, more sepulchral than ever, still penetrated every corner of the listening room. He got

up late, and enjoyed the best coffee in France. He ate and drank sparingly, but his wines and dishes were the most exquisite that could be found. He sat up till the small hours at cards, at billiards, in conversation, in the writing of his Memoirs and his correspondence. He entertained numerous guests from France and England beneath the huge Moorish-looking domes that guarded the angles of his great castle, and he drove happily about with them along the avenue of chestnuts that led into his wide domains. His servants loved him to a man. His neighbours, when they understood him, respected him as well; even Royer-Collard, the Doctrinaire philosopher at Château Vieux, succumbed to the charm of his personality. It is a pity that George Sand, the most distinguished of them all, destroyed



334.—FROM THE LIBRARY THROUGH THE SALON.



the value of the true details she gives in the *Lettres d'un Voyageur* by her outrageous calumnies against a man of eighty.

In 1824 Charles X succeeded Louis XVIII. Talleyrand had made very few public appearances in Paris in the interval, one of them being a speech to the Peers defending the liberty of the Press. But it was he who brought the Duke of Orleans to Paris after Charles X had fled. In 1830 he was sent to the Embassy in London, taking the Duchesse de Dino with him, and their salon was a favourite meeting-place for Wellington, Lord Aberdeen, the Princess Lieven and many more. In opposition both to his own Government and to their emissary, Count Flahaut, he persistently opposed the annexation of Belgium by France, and continued fighting until Prince



335.—THE SALON.

Leopold of Saxe-Coburg was firmly installed upon the Belgian throne. When Lord Londonderry attacked him in the House of Lords, he was warmly defended by Lord Holland and the Duke of Wellington. In April, 1834, he crowned his diplomatic work by signing the alliance between England, France, Spain and Portugal. It was time for the last act to begin, and Talleyrand retired for the last time to Valençay. He had determined to "die decently" as he had lived according to his standard of good taste. He therefore moved into his great house in the capital of France, when he felt the end was near.

If his funeral were to be as princely and respectable as he felt would be appropriate to a king-maker, the forms of religion imposed themselves as necessary. So the Abbé Dupanloup became his frequent visitor. The Pope openly rejoiced at the apparently successful result. The King himself visited "the dying lion." Talleyrand breathed his last in Paris, with courage and composure, amid an almost regal pomp and reverence, and was careful not to enter another world without bidding a decorous and dignified farewell to that he left behind. This was a fitting close to so dramatic a career, filled with so many and so varied episodes. Within its span the old *régime* had passed in blood and flame. New governments had risen hot-foot from its grave and fallen in turn to swift extinction. Amid the eddying clouds of political phantasmagoria, the personality of Talleyrand stands out like a rock amid the nebulous fumes that had choked all lesser natures. A man may be a traitor once without discovery. He may be a traitor twice and escape all penalty save self-effacement. But he cannot play the traitor all his life and die as Talleyrand died in Paris.



The man who had seen Napoleon dictating notes to his army at Berlin in the Cabinet of Frederick the Great was likely to take a rather larger view both of international politics and of domestic issues than the conventional patriot. But his later career only reflected the principles of his early life ; for Talleyrand was always consistent, always devoid of all hypocrisy ; he loved his country, he sought peace and ensued it ; and he lived his own life at the dictates of his own dispassionate reason. If he had conspired, then the whole of France were with him in the conspiracy. If he "deserted" a cause, that cause had already lost everything essential to its being. If he "attacked the Church," he only realised that since a part of its enormous revenues (including his own income) was necessary to the rest of the nation, the inevitable operation had better be carried out justly and advisedly, instead of by precarious methods of ill-considered pillage. If he did not believe in the divine right of kings, he laughed at the divine right of the mob. He loved greatness, but he never forgot himself. His ideals may not be what are called the highest ; but he carried them out unflinchingly, without concealment and without regret ; and by no other standards would he have desired that his attainment should be judged.



336.—CHAMBRE DU ROI.



CHAPTER XXIV.

CHEVERNY, LOIRE-ET-CHER.\*

"A GLIMPSE of perfection," wrote Henry James, when he first saw Cheverny. . . . "A light, sweet mansion stood looking over a wide green lawn, over banks of flowers and groups of trees. It had a striking character of elegance, produced partly by a series of Renaissance busts let into circular niches in the façade." That façade was built in 1634 by Boyer of Blois, the architect, for the son of the great Chancellor, Philip Hurault, Vicomte de Cheverny, and the suavely ordered dignity and cleanliness which are its distinguishing characteristics, both inside and out, are typical of its history. The Chancellor's "legendary-looking bed," on which he died in 1599, the travelling-trunk of Henri Quatre, the delicate lacework of the fine stone staircase leading to the Salle des Gardes, a few fine pictures and some admirable rooms—these are the details that make up the traveller's memory of Cheverny. No bloodstains darken its walls, no unquiet spectres haunt the passages of this splendid country house, which was built just when the very last playful impulses of the French Renaissance were dying away in the more restrained stateliness of Mansard and the builders of the Roi Soleil. Cheverny has neither the rude strength of Chaumont nor the riotous exuberance of Chambord, its two earlier neighbours. No siege-guns ever battered its sedate façade, no politicians cut each other's throats within its secret hiding-places. It is as much as I can do to find the faint aroma of one single far-off unauthenticated wisp of old Romance. And yet Cheverny is full of an impalpable, incommunicable charm, a charm that has remained unbroken.

It is the home of an old family that reached its zenith just before that home was built, and has been living up to the level of that great tradition ever since. Outside the France of Louis XIII I know no other country, save the England of Queen Anne, that could have built Cheverny, and so set it in its fitting frame, at the end of its long, broad avenue, and opposite the porch of the old church of Cour-Cheverny. There is a sense of age that disdains the artifice of looking too old-fashioned. There is a proud but quiet self-possession in its atmosphere, which seems to spring from the conviction that what was suitable for a Cheverny of 1634 will suit his descendants for all time, and will be far better than any casual intruder of a later day is likely to deserve.

It was in the middle of the fourteenth century that Philip Hurault from Brittany first bought the lands owned in this place by Henri le Mareschau under the Count of Blois. Philip's father had served under John II, Duke of Brittany, against the King of France. Philip himself became one of the most devoted adherents of Charles de Blois, and died beside him on the fatal field of Auray in 1364. This Philip had a grandson, Lord of Grange, Cheverny, Hurial and Vibraye, who married Jeanette Thierry and begat a son named Jacques, who bought, with money won in the hard war-service of Louis XI, the actual land on which the château stands. He further added to his riches by the lucrative office of General of Finance under Louis XII, and he left the Cheverny estate to his eldest son, Raoul, the builder of the dovecote on the left of the entrance gate. From Denys Hurault, fourth son of that Raoul, the Denys Hurault who owned Cheverny in 1825 was directly descended. But there were vicissitudes between. Of Raoul's château nothing save two towers in the present stables is now left; but within it died Philip, the famous Chancellor, whose son, Henri Hurault, created Comte de Cheverny, built the "glimpse of perfection" we know. It then passed to that son's sister, who married François de Paule de Clermont-Gallerande, Marquis de Montglat, an official at the Court of

\* The Seat of the Marquis de Vibraye.



Versailles. For a time Cheverny was lost to men of the old blood ; for after the Marquise de Montglat had died it passed to the Countess Harcourt, to a Dufort, to a Germain, to a Guillot. Whether this last felt constrained to sell, if sell he must, to the descendants of the original owners, or whether the old family had only been watching for an opportunity, I cannot say ; but in 1825 the Marquise Hurault de Vibraye bought Cheverny, and by her grandson, a Hurault and a Vibraye, Cheverny is now owned. It is so rare to meet with a case like this in France that when

in Josselin we find a living Rohan, or in Cheverny the Huraults of its birth, the fact is worth more than a passing note. The red trench that was cut through French history by the Revolution has made it practically impossible to find across the Channel a family which has lived on the same spot, as several families have lived in England, for more than seven hundred years. But at last the old French families have come back to their old homes, when they could find them, and Cheverny offers one of the best examples in Europe of the perfect survival of the domestic architecture and the internal decorations of the seventeenth century.

It was just before that century began that the great Chancellor Cheverny died, for in 1599, the year



337.—FIREPLACE IN THE SALLE DES GARDES.

that saw the death of Gabrielle d'Estrées, he passed into his rest, and it is by no mere chance that the travelling-chest of Henry of Navarre is one of the most cherished possessions in the château of the Chancellor's son ; for in a life that had seen the gradual rise of the Béarnais through the intrigues and follies of the Court of Henry III, the character and personality of Henry IV were not unlikely to be the most abiding memories.





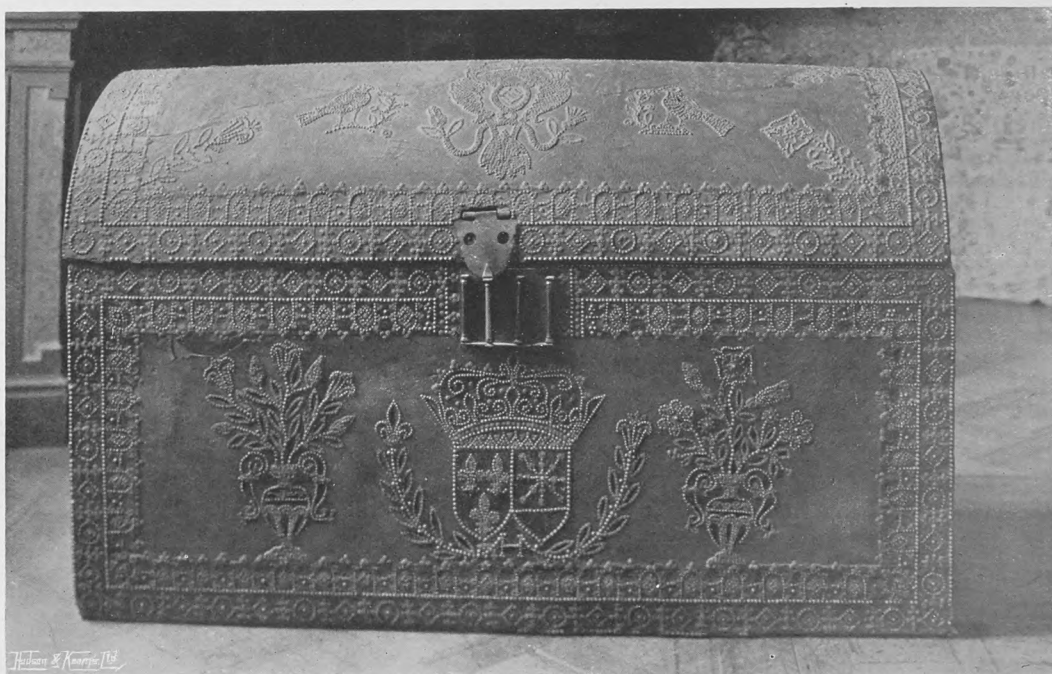
338.—NORTH FACADE FROM THE MOAT.



Cheverny had seen the "Noces Vermeilles" of 1572, when Henry of Navarre married the Princess Marguerite on the eve of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. He had watched the efforts of Catherine de Médici to turn the "country prince" into ridicule. He knew when all France slowly turned towards that prince for rescue from her misery; perhaps he realised why the dumb instinct of the masses of the people picked out this one man as their saviour. Cheverny, I say, may have realised; but the stern historian is scarcely capable of doing so. For death has stilled that brilliant, that vivacious temperament, which not only led armies but created them, which not only ruled the French but made them laugh.

Henry of Navarre had the great good fortune to be born in that aristocracy of virtue, of intellect, of lineage which held the Protestant leaders of sixteenth century France. Removed by many degrees from his kinsman, Henry III, his first common ancestor in male descent was Saint Louis, three hundred years before. Nearer to him was Francis I, his great-uncle, "le gros garçon qui gâta tout," for his grandmother was the dreamy, clever Marguerite de Navarre. His mother, Jeanne d'Albret, was the most honest and courageous woman of her time, and to her son she handed on what little proportion of that splendid nature his curious, active, protean character could absorb. Henry was what the French call "Mâle," in a surprising degree. He was a great talker, and he talked with everyone. He was, more by token, a Gascon of Gascony,

and to its rather flamboyant attributes he added a gay indifference to the serious things of life which must have often horrified his closest associates of the "Reformed Religion." His feelings were so quick and so visible upon the surface, that his rapidity of sensation was often mistaken for sincerity. His kindly, free, large-gestured friendliness was irresistible. It assured his popularity. When Henry III was assassinated, he listened to no counsels of prudence,



339.—MARRIAGE COFFIN OF HENRI QUATRE.

still less of flight. He waited sword in hand at Arques. As Givry said, he seemed indeed "Le Roi des Braves"; yet his kingdom was but the trenches near Dieppe, his people but a handful of his faithful soldiers. Yet by that handful he held France. His cannons dashed through Mayenne's cavalry, and the fight was won.

It is not too much to say that all Europe was looking on. The Gascon's instinct for effect had been superb; no less his courage. He had, as Mornay told him, "hazarded his kingdom on a throw," and won. Of all this you cannot but think as you see that nail-studded chest, and remember how much its owner's life meant to the Chancellor, who died when the destiny of Henry IV had not yet reached its height, and when the seventeenth century that was to see Cheverny built had not yet dawned. Yet Cheverny, as we visit it to-day, seems still so fresh and fair that the days of Henry IV and his old travelling-chest seem scarce more aged than the days when the rooms that guard it now were built. The Salle des Gardes and the Chambre du Roi are still almost exactly as they were on the first floor when they were lived in first, and they have been lived in ever since. The grace of constant habitation, defying all analysis, yet wholly inimitable and distinct, clings round these spacious rooms that never seem crowded with pictures or with furniture, and yet are full of all those nameless, characteristic trifles that generations of courtly owners left behind. Their tapestries, their armchairs, their "occasional





340.—THE SALLE DES GARDES.



tables," their family portraits, their favourite pictures are all here; and I am sure Mme. de Sévigné would feel as much at home here as any friend of the present Marquise de Vibraye's, next Sunday afternoon.

It is with the name of Mme. de Sévigné that I must connect that thin thread of romance which can with difficulty be detected shining, here and there, through the rich but sombre

background of a family history so respectable as to be almost—I shrink from the word, even at this distance—dull. From Les Rochers is dated an appeal to her cousin, Bussy-Rabutin, that has to do with a châtelaine of Cheverny. Of all the extraordinary personages we meet in that amazing portrait gallery which the French seventeenth century has left us, this Bussy is one of the most typical. He was in the army when he was sixteen, and "inherited" the command of a regiment two years later. At twenty his duels and gallantries had already caused even more sensation than his exploits in the field. Venus seemed determined (in the language of the day) to wrest the hero from the arms of Mars. That young man was among the first to recognise the value



341.—BUST OF HENRI QUATRE IN THE DINING-ROOM.

of advertisement, which is not forgotten even in our own more sober days. He insisted on being talked about, whether for good or evil. He was not forgetful of the charms of literature; and it would be difficult to say that he preferred being a cavalry leader under Turenne to being a member of the French Academy. But he discovered, to his sorrow, that the pen is mightier than the sword. What no other blade in France could do was done by his



*Histoire Amoureuse des Gaules*. It fairly laid him low. After an imprisonment for more than a year in the Bastille he was exiled for seventeen years longer in his estates in Burgundy.

Marie de Rabutin-Chantal, better known as Mme. de Sévigné, was herself the daughter of a notorious duellist and lost her faithless husband in a duel. She was not likely, therefore, to conceal her sympathy for the belligerent Bussy, who professed even warmer feelings for his attractive cousin. But she never quite forgave his scandalous *Histoire Amoureuse*; and there were certain portraits in the château of Bussy-Rabutin which, we may suspect, she never forgave either. Bussy had a curious habit of scrawling epigrams on all his picture frames. Beneath his cousin Marie's he wrote, "Married to a Breton who was thus honoured by alliances with the families of Vassé and of Rabutin." She points out in a letter of 1668 from Paris that her husband's stock could count three hundred and fifty years of knightly honours, and alliances with such houses as Montmorency, Château-giron, Rohan, Clisson, Guesclin and many more. She begs Bussy to alter the inscription.

This was a slight reparation that could easily be made. But there were other things not so quickly to be pardoned. One of these was the cruel witticism he permitted himself on the subject of Mme. de Sévigné in the *Histoire*



342.—IN THE GRAND SALOON.

*Amoureuse*, where the high rank of the Duchesse d'Olonne and the Duchesse de Châtillon did not save them from the most cynically outspoken attacks, where even the Duchesse de Longueville was grossly insulted. The reason why he did not shrink from putting his own cousin in such company may be found partly in the fact that Mme. de Sévigné could not see her way to lend him money, and partly in her very natural refusal to gratify the amorous advances of so notorious a libertine. She reproaches him with an indulgent moderation that can scarcely be too much admired. "To be bandied about in everybody's hands, to be in print, to be the laughing-stock of the provinces (where no greater



harm could happen to anyone), to find one's self in a library, and to suffer all this pain at the hands of . . . a Rabutin! . . . How you must have laughed at me and Madame de Montglat, for having been so duped! . . .” Even this was not all. Mme. de Montglat, youngest daughter of the Chancellor Cheverny, and one of Mme. de Sévigné's closest friends, has been accused of being Bussy's mistress. In his château, where his rooms are still almost exactly as he left them, the walls are covered with pictures and devices (many by his own hand) of those frail fair ones with whom he desired posterity to connect his gallantries. Phryne herself could not be convicted on such evidence. The beautiful Marquise de Montglat is here depicted, light as the zephyrs, changing as the moon and wandering as the swallows. She was so pilloried, I cannot but think, for much the same reason as was Mme. de Sévigné. She, too, refused. But she had made upon that volatile spirit a mark so deep that it was never effaced. Bussy says of himself in one place: “I could not endure my mistress any longer; she was too fond of me”; and in another: “Extreme youth is incapable of reflection, for it is so full of life and fire and enthusiasm, that there is no room for tenderness. The time for a long and deep attachment had not yet arrived.” With Mme. de Montglat it came; but this time it was the lady who proved unwilling. His whole armoury was ineffective. “Large soft eyes, a

well-cut mouth, a somewhat large aquiline nose, a full brow, light silky hair, an open countenance and an expression of winning happiness. These, with a wit as delicate as it could be pungent, and a pretty spirit of gaiety. . . .” These were no despicable weapons in a man of Bussy's unscrupulous gallantry. Yet they failed. It was a failure he neither forgot nor forgave.

The lady—if I may quote again from so vivacious and interesting an author as her despairing admirer—had “small but black and brilliant eyes, an agreeable mouth, the nose slightly tip-tilted, delicately cut features, and a charming expression. Her personal cleanliness was remarkable, and



343.—IN THE ROYAL BEDCHAMBER.



the air left her lips more sweet than it had entered them. Her bosom was most exquisitely modelled, her arms and hands were lovely. In height she was of a fair moderation, neither tall nor short, and will always keep a pretty figure if she can escape the inconvenience of growing stout. Her intelligence, like her colouring, is quick and ardent almost to excess, for she talks and writes with surprising rapidity and as naturally as possible. But she often loses the thread of a conversation, and very few subjects are important enough to hold her attention for long. Sometimes she will beg you to tell her the news, and as soon as you have begun she will forget why



344.—IN THE ROYAL BEDCHAMBER.

she was curious, and being full of an impatient fire she interrupts your words to talk of something else. She loves music and poetry, and writes verses that are by no means bad. Her voice is better than that of any woman of her birth in France, and nobody is a lighter dancer. She dislikes being alone. Her friendships are strong enough to make her defend her friends with almost brutal vehemence when they are attacked in her presence, and she would give them everything she had if they were in need of it. Their secrets are safe with her as well. She manages to get on easily with everyone, and her manners are those which befit a lady of her rank, but they are due more to what she considers owing from herself than to any desire of flattering another, though she would not willingly offend anyone. This means that she does not win hearts so quickly as many more insinuating women might, but her strength of character has only to be appreciated to hold her friends in the most lasting bonds."

We can scarcely wonder that she captivated Bussy, and that she inspired such verses as the following from his too facile pen :

De tous côtés  
On vous desire ;  
Mais quand vos yeux ôtent les libertés  
On veut aussi que votre âme soupire.



Whether her heart was harder than Bussy's or not I cannot tell; it was certainly less susceptible, and the charm of the Marquise de Montglat proved not merely penetrating, but



345.—TWO CARVED CARTOUCHES.



346.—DETAILS OF CARVED PANELS ON STAIRCASE.

as lasting as it was deep. Bussy, I fear, did not bear failure well. To that his château is a testimony, which few men would have cared to leave behind them, even had the Marquise proved as frail as she was fair.

There is a tale of this châtelaine of Cheverny, with how much truth in it I cannot tell, which gives her side of the story, and which I therefore venture to sketch here, in her old home. She was a young wife of an old Court official, and in the bewildering atmosphere of her first few seasons at Versailles she fell a victim to the insidious tongue of Bussy. But he could persuade her to no more than money. Having satisfied her uneasy and inexperienced mind that she would be compromised unless he went away and that he could not join his regiment without cash, he managed to get from her the Cheverny diamonds as security for a loan. On his return he suggested that the famous *Histoire Amoureuse* would be her sufficient recompense; and we may be sure his scoundrelly tongue had wagged too freely in the interval. No entreaties moved him in the least, and it became necessary for the lady to wear the famous jewels at the next Court function. You may imagine how remorse at the





347.—THE ROYAL BEDCHAMBER.



loss of the heirloom, at the robbery of her infant son—for it was no less—tortured her young heart, until she found that the gems had been bought back from the pawnbroker by her husband. True or not, that little story of the Chancellor's daughter will always come back to me at the Château of Cheverny; and when you see the countless traces of the Marquise de Montglat in the Château of Bussy-Rabutin, remember she was the heiress of Cheverny, and you will never believe she was so black a rascal's mistress; remember, too, that she was the friend of Marie de Sévigné, and in the quiet gardens of Les Rochers you will never believe she stooped to Bussy-Rabutin.

The château that she saw in the first beauty of its new creation has only been mellowed into greater loveliness by the passing of more than two centuries since her death. Indeed, many of the rooms must be just as she left them when they passed on to the Harcourts. They deepen the impression made by the exterior, the impression of a house built for nothing but shelter and the joy of living without a thought of defence, and "not too big for virtue." Its inhabitants—and it has been inhabited ever since it first came into being—have evidently never considered other people either as enemies or as slaves, only as fellow-sojourners in the urbane universe which is made up of smooth-clipped lawns and shady cedars, of broad windows and



348.—CARVING ON STAIRCASE.

fine pictures and old furniture. The portraits I remember best in the grand saloon are those of the founder, Philip Hurault, and his wife, Anne de Thou, a relation of that friend of the unhappy Cinq Mars who perished with him on the scaffold. Their daughter's black hair strung with pearls shines at you above the mantel-piece. But two other pictures, not of the Cheverny family, are finer than any. The first is a magnificent painting of Cosimo de' Medici, near the door of the same room, which has been retouched here and there, but retains the masterly handling and the magnificent breadth of style of the best Venetians. The other is an admirable pencil sketch of Charles X by Robert le Fèvre. The less said of the Don Quixote series, on the panels of the gallery, the better.

On the first floor is the royal suite of apartments, in which the *Chambre du Roi* deserves selection above almost any other inhabited room in France, as a typical example of the magnificence of seventeenth century domestic decoration. On the ceiling, and above the door and chimney-piece, are paintings of the story of Perseus, and the panels are devoted to scenes in the lives of Theagenes and Chariclea, among the best of which is a group of little children (painted on a gold ground) playing with Medusa's hand. They are, on the whole, a distinguished tribute to the talent of Jean Mosnier of Blois, who, no doubt, was also responsible for the arabesques and flowers, besides the Venus and Adonis above the splendid chimney-piece in the *Salle des Gardes*, a design which has many good points, but has not been very well carried out. There are also several admirable examples of furniture and tapestry. The *Chambre du Roi* contains the first parquetry known to have been made after tiles went out, such tiles as you may see in the long gallery at Beauregard, near by, representing an army of the reign of Louis XIV.

The whole Château of Cheverny offers, as I have said, a most interesting transition between the last of the Renaissance and the school which rose to its zenith under the "*Roi Soleil*"; and you can see traces of both influences in the interior, as in the exterior, of this same building. For while its foundations and its massive wing-pavilions somewhat suggest the style of Mansard, the delicately framed medallions of the façade are of an older day; and in the same way, while the plan of the apartments is very much of the school of Louis XIV, the staircase is visibly Renaissance throughout its decoration, many charming details of which Mr. Evans has been able to photograph for these pages.

The delightful statuette of a child holding a shell above her head on one of the landings may be taken as an example of this feeling; and the daintily executed panels of flowers





349.—THE STAIRCASE : FIRST FLOOR.



and fruit, let into the massive piers at each corner, are especially graceful and effective. In the oblong niche above the main entrance in the central pavilion is the bust of the Chancellor, and the frames of the classic heads which line the rest of the façade are particularly worthy of notice, both for delicacy of design and excellence of execution. They repeat, with charming variations, the main motive of the central panel. Of this founder, thus so worthily commemorated by his son, I have purposely said little ; for in other châteaux my readers may possibly have found almost too much "history" ; and I shall have yet more to tell. Here, at Cheverny, I have purposely left the visitor to absorb for himself an atmosphere that need not be disturbed by facts.

That Philip Hurault was originally Chancellor to the Duc d'Anjou, King of Poland, and afterwards Governor of Orleans and Chartres ; that he rose to be Keeper of the Great Seal and Chancellor of France in 1583—these things seem to matter less than that he died in the great bed you may see upstairs, in 1599. He arrived there one day, says the Abbé de Pont-Levoy, one of his sons, and "was much annoyed at finding his own bed had been exchanged for one more beautiful. He ordered the old bed to be replaced, with its original tapestry, in his own room" ; and forthwith died in it. His epitaph is in the chapel, where lie buried three cousins of his house : Guy de Laval, who fell at Ivry ; Anne Hurault, Baron d'Uriec, slain at the siege of Salvagnac in 1586 ; and Louis de Villelinsant, who was killed at Lassé on the Maine, in 1589. A descendant of the same strong family lives beside them now. You feel that he can ask no better company.



350.—IN THE MUSIC ROOM.



CHAPTER XXV.

VAUX LE VICOMTE.\*

THE vast magnificence of Vaux le Vicomte, the ordered splendours of its enormous park, the sumptuous luxury of its huge apartments, at first produce a cumulative effect of bewilderment upon the visitor, which is still further confused by the historical associations of the place, and by the vague presentiment of some unknown, under-

lying tragedy. Its atmosphere is neither old nor modern. Its architecture reflects that traditional uncertainty which resulted from the death of one *régime* and was not yet strengthened by the vigour of the next; for Vaux le Vicomte saw both the fall of Fouquet and the rise of Louis XIV.

Among the swirling tides and treacherous quicksands of the Bay of Mont Saint Michel, a little rugged pinnacle of rock, barren of life, with a few desolate ruins near its summit, is known as the Isle of Tombelaine. Long after the Archangel's abbey-fortress had passed the highest of its fortunes, Tombelaine became the property of Fouquet,



351.—THE ENTRANCE.

\* The Seat of M. Sommier.



Superintendent of the Finances of France during the lifetime of Mazarin ; of Fouquet, who possessed Belle-Isle as well ; of Fouquet, who built Vaux le Vicomte in the reckless zenith of his uncounted and ill-gotten wealth. Alone, unloved, unvisited, cut off from sea and land, imprisoned by the tides and currents of that perilous gulf, the sullen rock of Tombelaine looms like a ghost above the midnight fogs that wrap the coast of France : the symbol of his dreadful end. De Tocqueville has forcibly described the terrible position of those French " *Surintendants de Finance* " who, from Marigny to Necker, were between the devil and the deep sea. The inequalities of taxation only produced a limited total, in spite of the hideous suffering they so often inflicted ; but the " necessities " of princes recognised no limits whatsoever. For the last three centuries of Monarchy in France the evil grew and grew until it passed all bounds. Of the twelve men who held the post of " General of Finance," from Marigny in 1315 to the unhappy Antoine Bohier in 1535, whom we met at Chenonceaux, eight had died violent deaths, three had been



352.—LOOKING UP THE MOAT.

ruined ; Florimond Robertet alone, under Charles VIII and Louis XII, had lived and died unmolested. The sordid judicial murder of Jacques de Beaune Semblançay by Louise of Savoy is a type of the danger they ran even when their careers were honest. The fall of Fouquet is the classical instance of the swift vengeance that sometimes overtook them when they had lost all sense of honesty at all. Yet in many cases the magnificent use they made of their resources has well-nigh obscured their faults in the judgment of a posterity which can still admire the palaces they built, which still enjoys the impetus they gave to art and architecture. Among the smiling lawns of Vaux le Vicomte it is difficult to believe that Fouquet was a villain. Among its borders and parterres and colonnades it is almost impossible to realise the shameless squandering of public money which alone enabled a private citizen to plan and finish them. Through pillars sculptured with the heads of gods and goddesses you pass beyond the wrought-iron railings of the entrance to the great courtyard, and beyond it rise the dome and lofty skyline of the chateau, above the sparkling waters of the moat. Around the building spread the





353.—GATES AND CLAIRVOYEE.



unending acres of a formal pleasure-ground. Nature, almost as far as the eye can reach, has been subdued, corrected, measured by the hand of man. Discreet ponds, lined with clipped

hedges, make a mirror for the sky in calculated spaces. Obedient river gods, with their attendant nymphs, stand ready to pour out their never-failing urns. Clusters of cherubs hold aloft baskets of never-fading flowers. The very divinities themselves, in attitudes of cold and silent expectation, seem like stone courtiers in some Versailles Olympus, whose protection is no longer needed by the great ones of the earth. One stairway only, guarded by carved hounds upon each side, moves upwards into the unknown, and leads you to a mysterious glade of woodland where the scattered Termes peep out as though afraid to lose their freedom if they beckoned you away. Save for this one spot, save for this single artifice of contrast, the ordered landscape is completely subjugated to its rôle of decoration. The distances are but perspectives. The far-off forest serves but as a background to the chosen scene.

To see this masterpiece of conscious symmetry, and yet to think of the stupendous disarray of Fouquet's own career, induces almost chaotic reasoning. Vaux le Vicomte never reflected Fouquet's personal character. But, like all architecture that can still appeal to us, and will appeal to every generation, it is the faithful mirror of the age that gave it birth. To understand it, you must imagine something of that first half of the seventeenth century which saw these gigantic plans developed. The history of the place, at its most crucial period, may be said to be comprised in the twenty years after 1643. The dream of it was earlier, and to that dream I must now turn; to that phantasmagoria which, as the reign of Louis XIV, imposed more widely upon Europe than any other period since the Roman Empire. Its King, its Court, its representatives impressed the whole world outside because they made themselves, within, a world sufficient for themselves. The creative genius of Greece, the artistic strength of Italy were lacking. But there were here a harmony, a framework, which neither had possessed and which displayed the value of them both. The majestic immobility of the central figure aided the deception, with its lofty wig above the retreating brow.



354.—TERM IN ENTRANCE GRILLE.

Louis XIV had all that dead weight of resistance which is implied in mediocrity. Based upon complete ignorance of essential details, fortified by unending and unbending pride, the



majestic serenity of sovereign faith in his divine mission made his task easy for the "Roi Soleil." He felt himself the centre of the universe. He knew himself the instrument of God.

The polished eloquence, the grandiose art, the pompous palaces of the "Great Century" were but the first fruits of a political and social system which has penetrated modern life, and as the accompaniment of the birth of what is called the modern state they must all be first considered. When Richelieu held power men were weary with the combats of the reign of Henri Quatre. They willingly bartered individual freedom for the security of law and order. They lost their liberty as the price of the unity of the State, and of those powers of collective action which Richelieu insisted on producing.

The modern compromise between the freedom of the Subject and the authority of Government had not yet dawned upon political philosophy. The causes of dissension, the unlicensed ambitions of the nobles, had first to be destroyed. Out of the ruins of a selfish and unbridled aristocracy must be welded together the nation that is France. To that one task, and no unworthy one, everything else was subordinated in the mind of the great Minister. Learning, letters and architecture were only recognised as officially existing in his academy. Continued pressure from outside, continuous menaces from Austria-Spain, assisted his task of consolidated centralisation. Rebellions and schisms within the country had swiftly to be stamped out unless her frontiers were to be invaded by the watchful foe. Nothing must interfere with that supreme struggle. Rebels like the Duc de Montmorency must be beheaded. Convictions in similar cases must never end in an acquittal.

The Academy itself, far from being what the astonished Scarron had imagined, was a very practical literary police in the same service. Its very "Dictionary" was an instrument to secure a clearness in the national speech which was to receive a still more brilliant polish from writers like De Retz or Mme. de Sévigné, from orators like Bossuet, from dramatists like Corneille and Molière. Such stern repression could not go on without a break. The death of Richelieu let loose the forces his mighty personality had so long restrained, and of those forces Fouquet was one of the most typical. He represented the old *régime* which Richelieu had struggled so bravely and so disinterestedly to crush, even at the price of forgetting all that sacredness of liberty and of life which the Renaissance



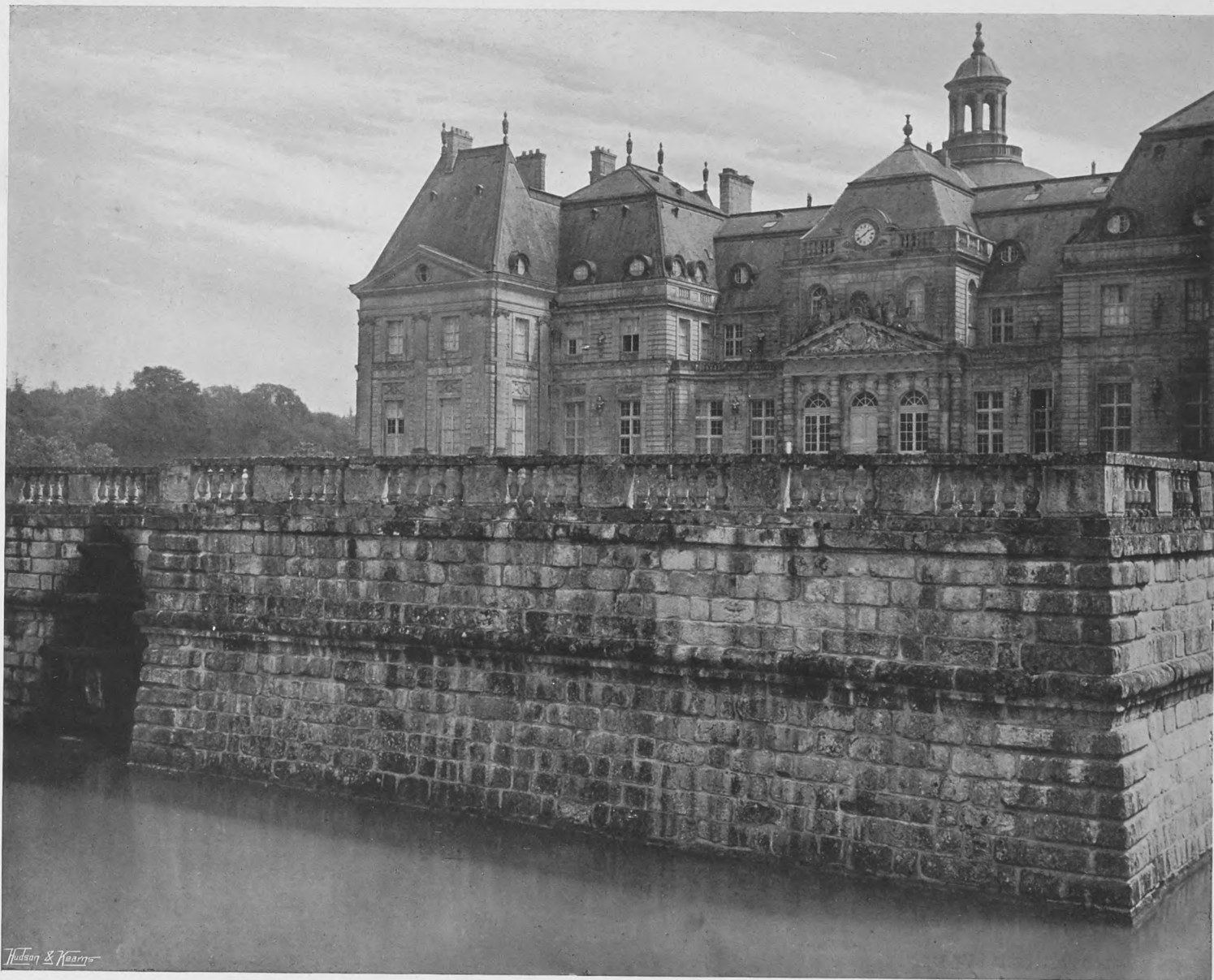
355.—STONE AND IRON.



had so richly fostered. Fouquet imagined that with the victory of Rocroy, the brilliant prelude to the real sovereignty of Louis XIV, and with the rise of Mazarin, the husband of the Queen-Mother, he was safe. But he forgot that in Colbert the spirit of Richelieu still lived.

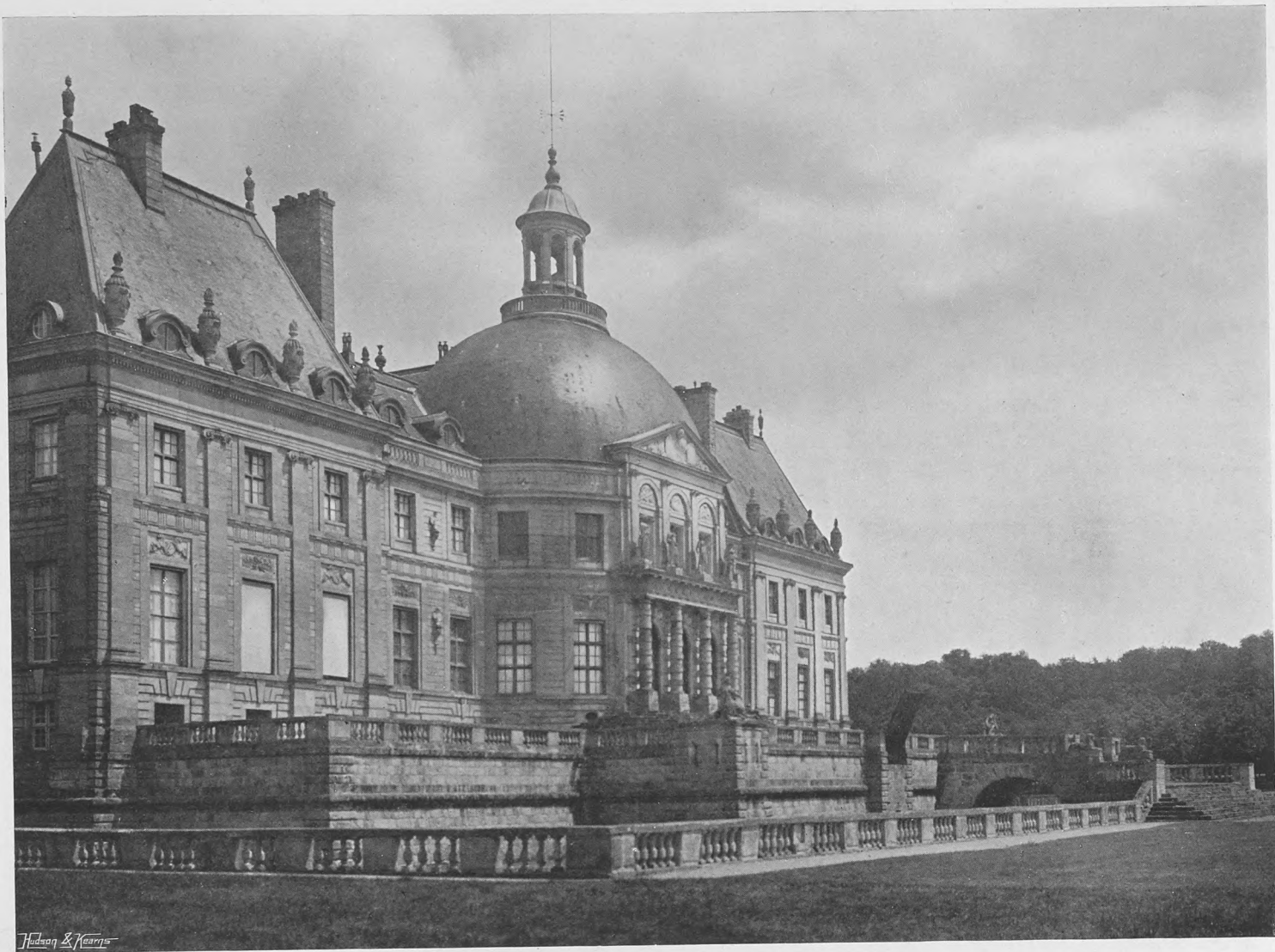
Mazarin had been his great predecessor's valet for so long that he tried to wear Richelieu's shoes as soon as his master had been safely buried. But, says his enemy, De Retz, what was honourable in one became disgraceful in the other. Mazarin laughed at religion, and promised everything because his promises were only made to break. He was neither kind nor cruel, for he was forgetful equally of benefits or injuries. Selfish, as all cowards are, he was careless both of reputation and of consequences. His timidity gave him foresight, but his prudence was never sufficient to forearm him. He had wit, address and fascination; but you saw the black heart through them all. The great Condé and Mme. de Longueville, his sister, were merely his instruments—expensive and avaricious, it is true, but instruments still, to be thrown into prison at Vincennes when necessary.

The misery and starvation of the poor of France from 1640 to 1660 were too terrible for description here. Desolated by the civil wars of the Fronde, from Paris outwards to the very frontiers which the Spanish troops ravaged, the fields were barren and the crops decayed. No money was left to repair these hideous disasters because, until his death in 1660, Mazarin was draining France of gold, through Fouquet, and many a million stayed within the conduit pipe. The youthful King, so newly come to power, suddenly opened yet another gulf that must at any cost be filled with money. His concerts, fêtes and balls absorbed a budget in themselves alone before a sou had been applied to the administration of the Government. The Cardinal's nieces, Marie and Olympe, were not the least lovely decorations of those reckless festivals.



356.—THE MOAT AND NORTH FRONT.





357.—THE SOUTH FRONT LOOKING EAST.

Tax upon tax had been imposed without regard to promises, without consideration of results, and still the handsome young King never got enough. The revenues of France were passing through a gambler's hands before they reached the throne; and much as Fouquet threw away to others, he always kept his own percentage. Let Vaux le Vicomte say how high that was. Mazarin himself died worth more than any single citizen before him, and Louis could afford to look generous by only seizing those millions which had been privately hoarded in various fortresses. They at once made him the richest King in Europe. But it was not Fouquet who had told him where to find this hidden treasure.

Nicholas Fouquet was born of Breton parents and took kindly to piracy by nature, whether on sea or land, though neither his father nor his mother, the saintly Madeleine de Maupeou, can be held responsible for his luxurious and predatory tastes. He quickly realised that, under the system of shameless exploitation then called Government, he had only to steal enough to be able to bribe *everybody*! He imagined himself strong in other ways as well; for if he had helped many a needy noble to "maintain his position," he was also the friend of the Queen; and he was Procurator-General of Parliament, which meant that only by his own colleagues could his acts be questioned. During Mazarin's lifetime it was to the interest of both that no questions should be asked; and all the while Fouquet was building Vaux le Vicomte, and Colbert was waiting till it was finished to make certain of his prey. I imagine that some time before 1650 Fouquet had made up his mind that he could achieve the undertaking which began by levelling three villages to the ground, digging out huge canals and lakes, and moving mountains of earth from one part of the property to another. His natural gifts were great, his natural attractions strong and undeniable. Passionately fond of the arts in all their varied manifestations, he evidently was afraid of nothing when once he had determined to carry out a given artistic project. When the crash came it was impossible to unravel his own accounts from those which were of right the balance-sheets of France. In Paris, near the Palais Royal, at St. Mandé,



near Vincennes, he had already tried his 'prentice hand at building with considerable success. But Vaux was near the Viscounty of Melun, in which his father held prescriptive rights, and it was not too far from Fontainebleau. He soon selected it as the real scene for "something worthy of his dignity and fortunes," and work began upon the park and gardens as far back as 1643. He gradually collected round him a little court of the best artists in France, who were to captain the regiments of necessary workmen: Le Vau, already in service with the King at Fontainebleau, and already the architect of the Hôtel Lambert de Thorigny and the Château de Raincy; Le Brun, fresh from the classic canvases of Italy; Le Nôtre, the greatest landscape gardener in Europe; Molière and La Fontaine, to write him comedies and verses; and Courant and Lefévre, who were assisting in Le Brun's designs for *The Hunt of Meleager* and *The History of Constantine* at the tapestry manufactory at Maincy.

In the tenth volume of her *Clélie*, Mlle. de Scudéry describes Le Brun's design, which may still be seen on the staircase of the great terrace of the château. It represents a lion (Louis XIV) proudly protecting a squirrel (Fouquet) which takes refuge between its paws from the attacks of a serpent (Colbert). The serpent was on the squirrel's trail far more often than the squirrel ever imagined.

Colbert had secretly inspected these enormous preparations several times before the faithful Vatel found him out and stopped such dangerous scrutiny; and "Monsieur," walking with



358.—SOUTH FRONT FROM THE GARDENS.

his brother in the Louvre, once displayed all his usual tact by advising the King to "become Surintendant des Finances if your Majesty wishes to finish your house in Paris." Fouquet had no wish that even his patron the Cardinal should discover how many millions Vaux was costing; and when Mazarin had announced his intention of sleeping there one night, Fouquet hastily writes down to his agent: "Send away the labourers and masons who are working on the large canal, so that only a few may be seen; and let them go to the farms of Peuilly or Maisonrouge, or to Maincy." And again: "The King is soon going to Fontainebleau. Smooth down our earthworks a little, and let the labourers from Héricy go to their vineyards as they desired." So that after all the Surintendant may not have wholly trusted the patience of the "lion" under whose protection Le Brun suggests he felt so safe. As a matter of fact, the King visited Vaux twice before it was entirely finished: once with the Queen-Mother and his brother, who married the daughter of Charles I, and again, soon after his marriage, with the Queen. There were one hundred and twenty-one letters, written in Fouquet's own hand, concerning the work at Vaux, found in a strong box after his arrest. In one of them Talot is ordered to finish off the great terrace. In a second are directions for the payment of Peter Gittard (brother of Daniel, the architect) for carpentry and woodwork. In a third orders are given to "destroy all the uneven earth and rocks that are visible from one side of the 'basse-cour.'" No wonder a M. Villeveissin, of that neighbourhood, describes to the Queen in 1657 that he saw



nine hundred men at work there ; and this was only half the number employed as it approached completion. Vatel was Fouquet's major-domo, and Courtois was his confidential agent on the spot. Both knew very well that the revenues of the estate itself were wholly insufficient for the household bills ; and Vatel's share alone in the cost of the famous fête to Louis XIV was



359.—THE SOUTH ENTRANCE AND DRAWBRIDGE.

estimated at more than that year's income for the single day. It is curious to note how well chosen were all Fouquet's dependants. Those whom he had not taken directly from the King's service were all employed by Louis after the Surintendant's fall, from Le Brun to Vatel himself. I have said that the idea of creating Vaux le Vicomte must have occurred to Fouquet before



1650, and this is evident because of the time necessary for the completion of preliminary labour on the grounds and on the preparation of the site. But his appointment as Surintendant des Finances in 1653 no doubt put the full possibility of completion in his hands. Le Vau's plans and estimates for the actual building of the château itself were only signed in August, 1656, and as his first fête took place in June, 1660, the work must have been quickly done. It will be convenient here to consider the architecture of the house a little more closely before I speak of its contents or its surroundings. For Vaux le Vicomte, interesting as the type of one period, is still more suggestive as the origin of another, for it determined Louis XIV to build Versailles, and its site confirmed the idea, arising from other considerations, that the best place for a royal residence was outside Paris. The King's first motto was "L'Etat c'est moi." Paris had already given no uncertain signs that she was likely to become that France which Louis desired to be typified only in his own person. Paris had proved that her restlessness, her swift criticism, her sudden bursts of anger, could be inconvenient and undignified. The "Roi-Soleil" could not permit the intempestive juxtaposition of the cloudy rabble. As Napoleon said to Metternich, so Louis might have exclaimed: "I must have honour and glory; I cannot appear with diminished fame in the midst of my people; I must remain great, glorious, admired." "If not the greatest King," says Bolingbroke, "Louis was at least the greatest actor of majesty that ever filled a throne." His own divines never shrank from the fulsome flattery his soul adored; and no memories of La Vallière, Montespan, Fontanges and the rest suggested any



360.—FROM THE SOUTH GARDENS.

incongruity when he heard from the official pulpit that it was owing to "His Majesty's solicitude and good example that piety and morality prevailed throughout the kingdom"—the kingdom of the Brinvilliers and La Voisin! He instinctively preferred mediocrity in his companions, but he realised that admiration is a relief from that sense of entire subjection to the monarch's will which the welfare of the State demands; and he would thoroughly have endorsed Napoleon's principle of government that "it is necessary to work upon the imagination of mankind." So he surrounded himself with the creations of the best intellects.

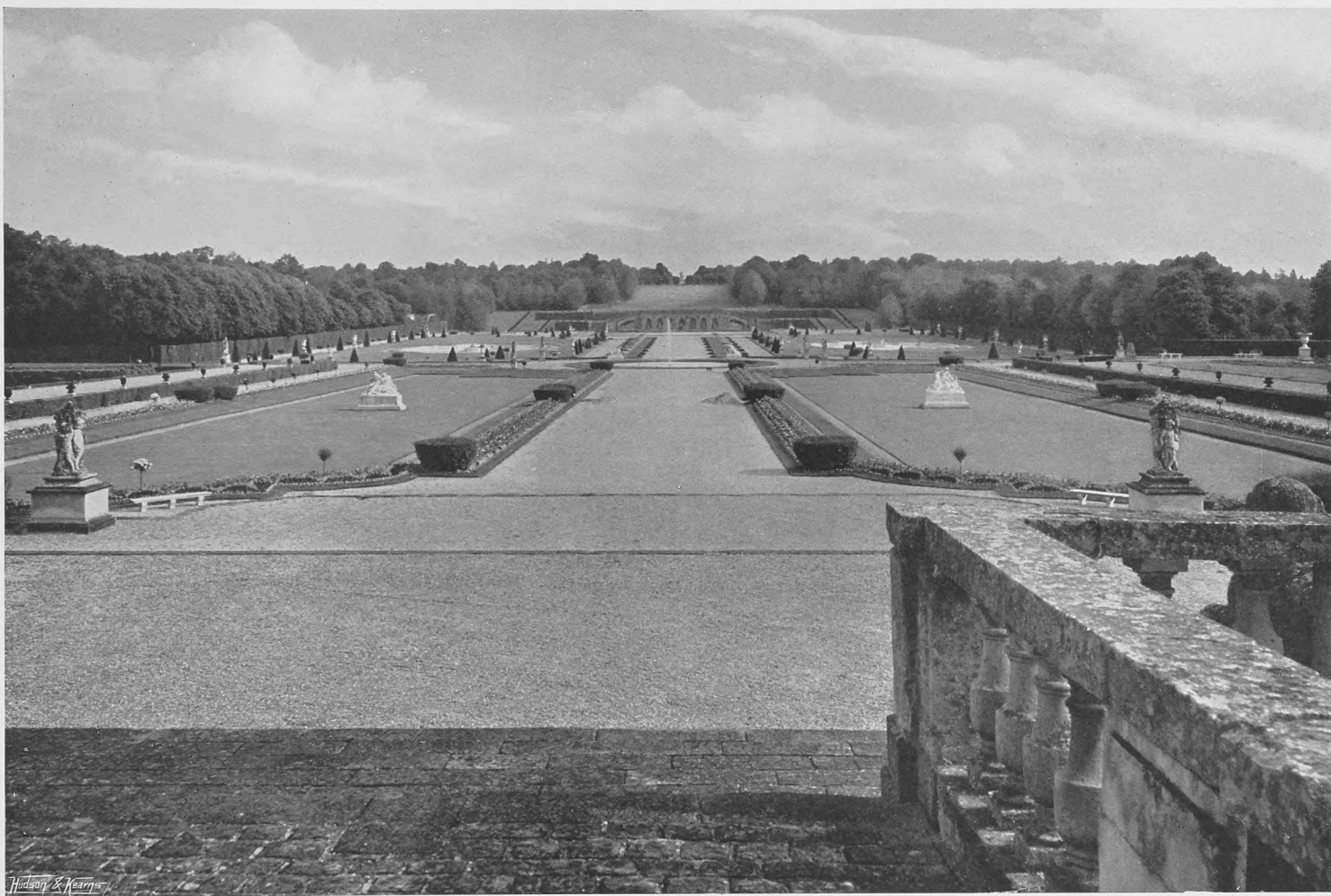
Whereas in the Gothic age nearly every town had had its marvellous church, and in the Renaissance nearly every village had the beauty of its château, the architecture of the "Grand Siècle" is mostly royal and governmental. After the possibilities of another Fouquet had been crushed by Colbert, no one but a king could imitate him.

The style of Fouquet's château, which was to be so exaggerated at Versailles, may perhaps be seen at its best in one of its earliest examples—the palace and gardens of the Luxembourg, in Paris, built as the Dowager residence of Marie de' Medici by Salomon De Brosse, whose designs may have been slightly influenced by the Pitti Palace in Florence. The last remnant of the fortified castle of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries has disappeared. The battlements are merely balustrades. The moat is the "artificial water" that lights up the formal garden. The house stands open and unprotected among the parterres of its widespread pleasaunce. Le Mercier carried the idea still further in his designs for Richelieu of what is now the Palais Royal. Le Vau worked on the same lines at Vaux le Vicomte, and the younger Mansart



developed still further what has long remained "the style of France," in other buildings for the King.

There is an excellence in the works of the Mansarts and their immediate predecessors which is all their own. They are solid, magnificent, spacious, dignified. In Vaux le Vicomte the architect seems well-nigh overwhelmed with the desire (to be still more emphasised at Versailles) to give a fit theatre for the pompous display of the wealth and greatness of his client, to give a splendid framework for the accumulation of talent at his command ; for painters, tapestry-workers, sculptors, furniture-makers to show off their masterpieces to the best advantage ; for landscape gardeners to surround it with the most unheard-of subtleties of their trade. Among all this there can have been but little chance for "the conveniences of a home." One vista of State apartments turns into another ; the enormous corridors lead only to other stately spaces. The world that lived in them must have continually been admiring itself, continually organising official receptions and festivities. The life seems to have taken as little account of privacy as of real



361.—LE NOTRE'S GARDENS FROM THE CHATEAU.

comfort. When later generations inherited these huge apartments they filled them up with tiny suites of rooms and little staircases. But the architecture of Vaux le Vicomte and Versailles corresponds to the wishes of their owners, and reflects the life of their time. It would be as ridiculous to indict an epoch as to abuse a nation. We must accept what each has left, even if it may not please us. I confess to an open preference for those pleasant graces which entice the eye in such examples of the earlier French Renaissance as Azay le Rideau, as opposed to the Italianate and severe and grandiose developments of the seventeenth century.

When once Le Vau, who was assisted by Antoine Bergeron, had finished the masonry of Vaux le Vicomte, Le Brun took possession of the interior, and Le Nôtre completed his great plan for the gardens. Charles Le Brun, an adroit man of the world, had very early recommended himself to Chancellor Séguier and Richelieu, and went to Rome with Poussin in 1642. When he returned, in 1647, he found Charles Errard installed at the Louvre, Versailles, and Fontainebleau. So he made friends with Mazarin, secured the favour of Colbert, and took



service with Fouquet. His name first occurs in the records of the tapestry works at Maincy in 1658—a significant fact, for in later years it was because he commanded the industrial arts through the Gobelins, and the rest of the profession through the Academy, that he put his stamp on everything produced in France throughout the last half of the seventeenth century.

In the very year when Fouquet's fall set free his workmen, Le Brun began his official career with the King by the restoration of the Little Gallery of the Louvre, in which he successfully supplanted Errard. In a very short time he had control over interests and activities so varied that in England they are now divided among a President of the Royal Academy, a Keeper of the King's Pictures, a First Commissioner of Works, and a Director of the South Kensington Museum; and, in addition to all this, he was producing several vast historical paintings every year, and furnishing designs for almost every other artist in the kingdom to carry out in almost every form of art. Such was the man whose tapestries and paintings still adorn Vaux le



362.—A FOUNTAIN TERRACE.

Vicomte; and when you see them it is worth remembering that it was the concentration of talent called together by Fouquet at Maincy which suggested to Colbert and to Louis XIV the centralisation and concentration of all the artistic possibilities of the kingdom on Versailles; and the great workshop of the Gobelins, the direct inheritor of Maincy, became an assemblage not only of embroiderers, but of painters, sculptors, goldsmiths, lapidaries, wood-carvers, cabinet-makers, metal-workers, who not only decorated Versailles, but raised and maintained the level of applied art throughout the whole of France. The names of the nineteen embroiderers collected for Fouquet at Maincy by Le Brun have been preserved from the village records by M. Eugène Grèsy. Many were working afterwards at the Gobelins.

On the right of the central Salle des Gardes, a large hall, nineteen metres by fourteen metres, is the door leading to the rooms of Fouquet's second wife, Marie Jeannin de Castille, whose portrait, painted by Le Brun, as a Magdalen, for an altar-piece of St. Etienne at Maincy, has unluckily been lost. La Fontaine's praises of her beauty alone remain. In the ante-chamber,





363.—PART OF THE FORMAL GARDEN.



now used as a billiard-room, is Le Brun's ceiling, called "The Apotheosis of Hercules," surrounded by eight bas-reliefs representing man dominating the elements. The demigod is lifted to the skies in a golden car, dragged by a black and a chestnut horse, and beneath one wheel is crushed the serpent (Colbert). The next room, called the *Chambre des Muses*, displays Le Brun's *Triumph of Fidelity*, who mounts to heaven with a spaniel on her knees, accompanied by Reason, Prudence and Virtue, while Apollo is aiming at Envy with his bow and arrow. Among the carvings is an eagle bearing aloft a squirrel, and displaying the device "Quo non ascendet." But it is the Muses placed in couples round the ceiling that are perhaps the most successful examples of Le Brun's art in the room, especially the laughing face of the lady who holds a comic mask in one hand, and the delicately modelled back of another playing the guitar. It is interesting to remember that, according to that excellent authority, Fournier-Sarlovèze, eight pieces of tapestry, hung here before Fouquet's disgrace, came from the long-disused manufactory of Mortlake, now chiefly known to fame by lovers of the Thames as the finish of the University Boat Race. Near Mme. Fouquet's room, in what is sometimes called the *Petit Salon*, is one of the most charming paintings (to my mind) that Le Brun did for the château, a delicate little winged figure asleep upon a cloud—a female *Morpheus*, far more calculated to suggest a pleasant night's repose than the Jupiter, Mercury, Mars and Pomona who surround the ceiling in the bedroom designed for the King's use, and furnished with a weighty bed, with railings in front of it like those you may see in Hampton Court Palace. The best ceilings on the upper floor are those which represent Actæon and Diana bathing. The portrait of black-haired Mme. Fouquet, as Beauty, aided by Minerva in chaining Cupid in the bonds of wedlock, unfortunately exists only in the descriptions of Félibien; and the group in which she appeared as Charity, done by Michel Auguier for the Orangery of St. Mandé, has been lost also. Among other painters whose names occur in the records of Vaux le Vicomte are Baudrain and Philippe Lallemand; but I cannot now point to anything they did for Fouquet which is still there.

The present enlightened owner, M. Sommier, has collected a series of historical portraits connected with the place, from Fouquet's time onwards; and I can conceive no one more capable of reuniting that famous Gallery of Beauties on which the gallant Superintendent so much prided himself. Nanteuil's engravings have preserved the charm of many of the lost originals. To him both Fouquet and the King had given sittings; and though he preferred famous men, the features of the celebrated Queen Christina of Sweden turned his attention to such subjects as Anne of Austria, the Duchesse de Nemours, or Marie de Braguelonne; and he completed, before his early death in 1678, the magnificent series which contains Richelieu, Mazarin, De Retz, Condé, Turenne, Bossuet, Le Tellier, Colbert, and the greatest of that Court for whose admiration Fouquet built Vaux le Vicomte. It is said that the inclusion of Louise de la Vallière's portrait gave the last touch of decisive anger to the young King's resentment at his subject's ostentation. It is appropriate here to add that Fouquet was also the patron of Bertinet, the medallist, three of whose most splendid designs, representing Louis XIV, have been preserved. He was passed on to Fouquet by the French Ambassador at Venice, where he had taken refuge after some romantic episodes in Rome. He married the beautiful Antonia Borromeo, was imprisoned after Fouquet's fall, and did a medal of his beloved master in his cell. After eight years he returned to Rome.

To Legendre, who had previously been working at Meudon with Sarrazin, and who was afterwards to work with Girardon and Magnier at Versailles, Le Brun allotted much of the stucco he designed to frame his paintings at Vaux le Vicomte. Poissant came with him in 1658. The names of Michel Magnan and Nicolas Lemart (who died four days before the famous fête) also occur in the accounts of the Surintendant, as does that of Auguier, whom Le Brun afterwards passed on to the Val de Grâce, and Jacques Prou, the cabinet-maker. The extraordinary talent of these men, in all kinds of materials and every scale of size, becomes very noticeable when their work can be accurately traced in the plaster or metal, the stone or wood, the colossal statues and the gem-like interior mouldings of Versailles. No doubt their tasks at Vaux le Vicomte were equally diversified; we can only be sure now that they were equally well done. One great name is missing in the records—that of Puget of Provence, though it is certain that the architect Lepautre, who saw Puget's work at the château of Vaudreuil,



recommended him to Fouquet, and that Fouquet sent him to bring marble from Genoa, where he carved the *Hercule Gaulois*, that extraordinarily vigorous statue now in the Louvre. This was only finished after Fouquet's death, was acquired on the spot by a M. des Noyers, and afterwards fell into the hands of Colbert, and became the chief ornament of the courts of Sceaux.

Whether from jealousy or from a generous preference for Girardon, or from distrust of Puget's strong and characteristic temperament, Le Brun never employed him at Versailles, and nothing of his was made for Vaux le Vicomte, except the *Hercules* which never got there. Poussin is known to have worked for Fouquet, and to have sought out Italian statues for him. But the sixteen great *Termes* of the "grille d'honneur" were probably carved in stone on the spot by Poissant, who did the bas-relief of *Fame* on the garden façade of the salon, and very probably modelled also the caryatides of the dome under Le Brun's direction. Auguier also is known to have supplied sculpture for Vaux le Vicomte, especially some statues of philosophers, and of *Apollo* and *Rhea*, each six feet high. He may very possibly also have carved the



364.—STEPS FROM THE GARDEN TO THE WOOD (THE BUFFET D'EAU).

*Hercules* which originally stood at the end of the gardens, the pendant of the *Fouquet-Hercules* in the château by Le Brun, and not any suggestion (as some have imagined) of the workmen of Vaux le Vicomte resting after their labours and seeing that they were good.

The Head of the Fountains and Waterworks was Claude Robillart, who came to Vaux in 1659, and was no doubt responsible for the proper management of the one hundred and fifty jets of water which Israel Silvestre shows in his detailed drawings of Vaux le Vicomte, for the "Fontaine de la Couronne," "de Galatée," the "Cascades," the "Gerbe d'Eau," the "Animaux" and many more. When later owners sold the leaden pipes, they brought an enormous sum of money, and it was not the least of M. Sommier's labours to replace them. They helped to keep fresh and clean the numberless parterres and lawns cared for by the head-gardener, Antoine Trumel, who married Françoise des Margotiers, concierge at Vaux in 1658. But both these men worked under the directions, and carried out the designs, of a much greater genius.



André Le Nôtre, who laid out the great formal gardens after plans agreed upon between himself and Le Vau, but originated in his own fertile brain, was the son of Louis XIII's gardener at the Tuileries, and was very early a student of painting and design under Simon Vouet, the master of Le Brun, Le Sueur and Mignard, so that he was thoroughly capable of raising horticulture to a fine art. Le Nôtre in his youth could remember the old dark castles of the fifteenth century, with their moats and curtain walls; he could remember the more spacious pleasure-grounds which Philibert de l'Orme designed round Chenonceaux and Anet in the sixteenth; and he must have thoroughly enjoyed emphasising that sense of space and distance and regularity which was the fashion of the seventeenth. But he was forty before Fouquet called him from the espaliers of the Tuileries to that little room in the château of Vaux le Vicomte, where he was at last given his great opportunity, where he planned his noble setting for the works of Le Vau, of Le Brun, of Poussin, of Molière. He levelled hills, he destroyed



365.—AMORINI.

villages, he turned the course of streams, he drained marshes, he made roads, he planted shrubberies, he designed long vistas of perspective that led up to definite features in his plan; in fact, he had a free hand, as never gardener had had before him. At Versailles you may see him at his very biggest. In many another comparatively small seventeenth century château you may see him at his best. In nearly every case his plans were carefully preserved; and this fact enabled M. Sommier here, and assisted other equally artistic proprietors elsewhere (as at Champs), to reproduce almost exactly his designs more than a hundred years after the Revolution had destroyed them. I shall not attempt to describe these spacious gardens. Try as I may, I cannot wholly admire their style; but anyone can recognise that they are right for their period and place, appropriate for the people who first ordered them. I must pass on to greater matters. The gorgeous scenery has all been set. The curtain rises slowly; and the short tragi-comedy of Vaux le Vicomte must begin. Let me call up the actors to the stage.

On August 17th, 1661, was given the entertainment to Louis XIV which saw the perfection of Vaux le Vicomte, and sealed the death-warrant of its master. Fouquet cannot have enjoyed his château for more than three

years at most, and he probably did not spend much more than six months there altogether. He had scarcely satisfied himself that the most splendid estate in France had actually reached the completion of its artistic development when he was hurled into the Bastille. He died at Pignerol, next to the dungeon which guarded the impenetrable secret of the Man in the Iron Mask. So sudden a reversal of fortune and so terrible a fate may well have tempted many a playwright and novelist to choose it for their theme. But in the gardens of Vaux le Vicomte itself we have no need of Dumas' picturesque imaginations. The place is full of real ghosts. The facts that happened, the truths that underlay the brilliant scene, are theatrical enough to need no exaggeration.

Louis XIV had already seen something of what was to come on his return from his marriage to the Spanish Princess Maria Theresa, in June, 1660. But Fouquet had promised him better





366.—IN THE FORMAL GARDEN.



later on ; and the next year, after giving a brilliant entertainment to Henrietta Maria, widow of Charles I, he really showed the King of France what the richest of his subjects could do when he tried. It was not merely curiosity that led the young Louis to accept the invitation and come across from Fontainebleau. The political situation was complicated. Colbert had made strange revelations after the death of Mazarin. It was possible that one bold stroke might be of great service to the throne. Louis was not averse from sudden action if it avoided lengthy detail and dry deliberations. He had begun to see what money meant. He determined to

have more of it. He was decidedly annoyed to see that Fouquet had so much. Such was the temper of the central figure. The secondary actors were swayed by more complicated emotions.

Fouquet, it may be admitted, must have become intoxicated with the love of power and with the power of money. He had pocketed a large proportion of the taxes. He had bought up huge quantities of shares worth nothing and run up their value in the market for the profit of himself and his admirers. He had borrowed capital at ruinous rates of interest and thrown his creditors into prison after the first few payments. When that was impossible he had deliberately mortgaged the future of a national



367.—PASSAGE FROM GRAND SALON TO HALL.

source of revenue which he knew to be already exhausted. He borrowed money "for the State," and kept it, taking from the national resources the full repayment for a loan which had never benefited them a penny. He had so many "pensioners" among the high nobility that he felt safe against any of their attacks, and he was now ready to bid openly for popularity even against the gorgeous puppet on the throne.

The courtiers of the young King had their own game to play as well. It was difficult to see whether Fouquet or Colbert would win in the end, and most of them were careful not to quarrel





368.—THE GREAT CANAL.



with either. The whims of their royal master, his friends, his mistresses, his little jealousies, his constant arrogance—these were enough for immediate observation. For the moment Marie and Olympe Mancini need not absorb too much attention. The handsome Vardes had had his orders already about one of them. Mme. Henriette, sister of the English Charles II, had made a great success on her arrival. She also had to be considered. And among her ladies was a shy, blonde girl called Louise de la Vallière, so modest that she would scarcely lift her eyes to the positive young gentleman with the brown hair and the slight moustache, the delicate olive skin, and the thick Austrian lip which betrayed the royal appetites. She must be told she

was in love with His Majesty. The matter must be boldly managed if it was to succeed at all. The fête of Vaux le Vicomte was chosen as the scene of the *dénouement*.

You can imagine that brilliant company on an August afternoon, men and women too, in dresses of a hundred hues, in laces and ribbons and huge towering wigs, and hats with ostrich feathers that rose still higher in the scented air—leonine crests upon an ass's body, for the most part; inverted pyramids that seemed only to keep their balance by a miracle. Among these fashionable monstrosities you must not forget that this is the age of La Fontaine, of



369.—FROM THE SALLE D'ETE TO THE BIBLIOTHEQUE.

Mme. de Sévigné, of the prim Mme. Scarron, who is to mount so high later on, and of De Retz; of Le Brun, who is receiving compliments from everyone, we may be sure; finally, of Molière. Behind the King stand D'Artagnan and his musketeers. Behind the courtiers is Colbert. But those sinister figures trouble nobody as yet. Six thousand invitations have been sent, and nearly all accepted. The banquet is to be a dream of luxury. Let us follow them into the gardens to get an appetite. There was a maze, of course, most convenient for flirtations. There were nymphs in gilded boats to take out conversational couples on the water. There were grottoes and arbours, marble niches, hidden seats, and balustrades with vases and statues, and terraces from which you leant over the flower-beds, with musicians playing courtly tunes





370.—VIEW FROM THE SALLE D'ETE.



behind the box trees. Inside the house a "lottery" was being drawn, which was only M. le Surintendant's pretty way of giving everyone a present; jewels for the ladies and rapiers for the men. But I must abridge the catalogue. "Ah! Madam," cried Horace Walpole to the Countess of Ossory in 1789, "the nonsense of one age is not the nonsense of another age"; and we are nearly two hundred and fifty years away from the jokes of Fouquet's guests. Perhaps we can appreciate their dinner better. Vatel's best must have been a triumph that even our jaded palates might appreciate, especially if it was set forth on four hundred and thirty-two services of gold. But better than gardens, better even than the dinner, was the play that followed it in the Allée des Sapins:

De feuillages touffus la scène était parée  
Et de cent flambeaux éclairée . . .

But Molière appears in his ordinary dress. Can there by any chance have been some error in this marvellous entertainment? Listen! He apologises for having been thus surprised, for being thus alone—when suddenly a shell beside him opens, and out steps a lovely Naiad—

Béjart, her pretty self. She looks at the young King and begins:

Jeune, victorieux, sage, vaillant, illustre  
Aussi doux que sévère, aussi puissant que juste . . .



371.—THE LIBRARY.

of his own that darkened him more deeply when he was alone. He had to bear the thousand pin-pricks of the courtier, for he was in close attendance on the King who made it possible to produce his plays. And in those plays themselves you see the struggle; you read the politics of the moment behind the light-flung line; you guess the audacious double meaning in each sparkling repartee. His very heart is in "L'Ecole des femmes," and it is at the feet of Mme. Henriette he laid it, his "Princesse d'Elide." It was before Louise de la Vallière that the first part of the immortal *Tartufe* was produced. Even bolder, as a direct manifesto, was *Le Misanthrope* of a year or so later, in which Mme. Lauzun, Guiche and the rest were clearly recognisable. The great fête of Vaux, fatal to so many others, was the real beginning of Molière's greatness. *Les Fâcheux* was the sign-manual of royal favour, for the King himself was his collaborator.

But at Vaux the King sat through the entertainment with a moody brow. Poor little La Vallière, overcome, like almost all the rest, by the fairy-like magnificence of the surroundings, entrapped by Vardes, Saint-Aignan and the others, had no more to give. That part of the plot, at any rate, succeeded. But the King remained impassive. Later in the day he saw a fair face

The critics are smiling already. This may be flattery; but it is not poetry; it scarcely even rhymes. "Ah! By Péliisson; of course—" Now Péliisson was Fouquet's secretary; and even Le Brun's scenery and the pretty Béjart—who was getting on in life, by the way—scarcely helped the secretary's verses to smooth the way for Molière, and for that scene in *Les Fâcheux* which Royalty itself, it seems, had deigned, if not to write, at any rate to inspire. Molière was a figure almost as attractive as the undraped lady whose daughter of sixteen he married that same year. His vigorously masculine features were full of kindness, full of an honourable loyalty to what he loved, full, above all, of hot-blooded life and animation, with his strong thick nose, his broad lips, and those dark eyes which saw the shade behind the sunshine, and knew the tragedy he stifled with a laugh. There was a struggle





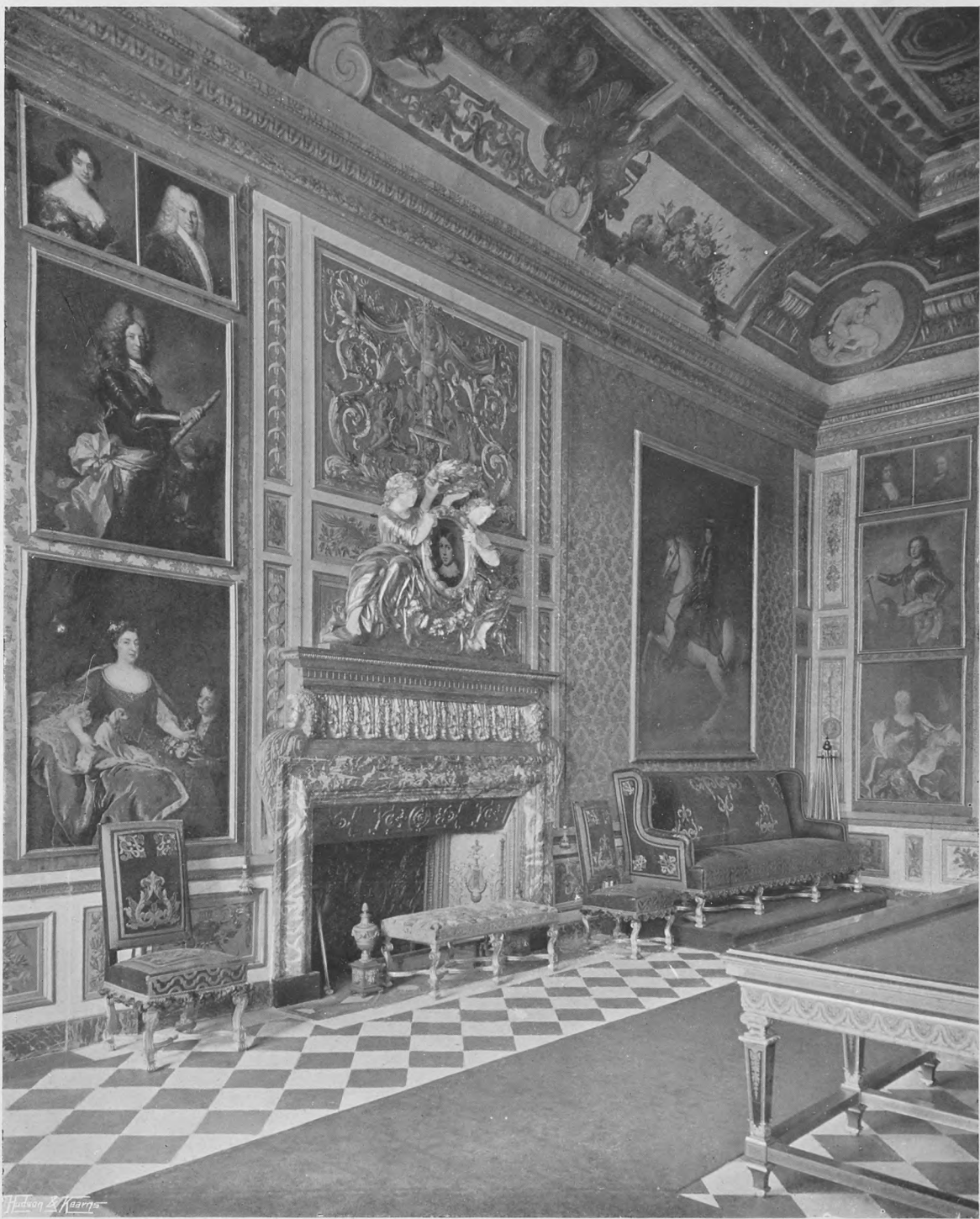
372.—A CORNER OF THE BOUDOIR.



among Le Brun's designs. Did Fouquet mean to compete for La Vallière's favours too? This was too much. And the motto: this "*Quo non ascendet*," what could that mean but one thing? Louis almost burst out upon the Surintendant on the spot. His mother restrained him. But Fouquet's doom was sealed. It only needed the adroit suggestion that the Surintendant's crafty offers of assistance to the future favourite were really his attempt to replace her Royal wooer. Louis could with difficulty carry on the farce. He determined to return that night to Fontainebleau, though the whole Court were watching with the greatest wonder such fountains as had never been seen before, lit up by countless fireworks in the darkening

gardens. The fête, instead of dying down, seemed gradually making a more brilliant climax. Mme. du Plessis-Bellièvre, one of the Surintendant's spies, slipped into his hand a note of warning. As Guise had done at Blois, so Fouquet tore it up at Vaux. The music went on playing. The crowd surged slowly towards the house. The few hundreds who had gone seemed to make little difference to the gallant total. There was a movement to and fro till dawn, and Fouquet never slept.

The next day he was in a slight fever, and kept his bed. On August 19th he heard that the King would go to Nantes to open



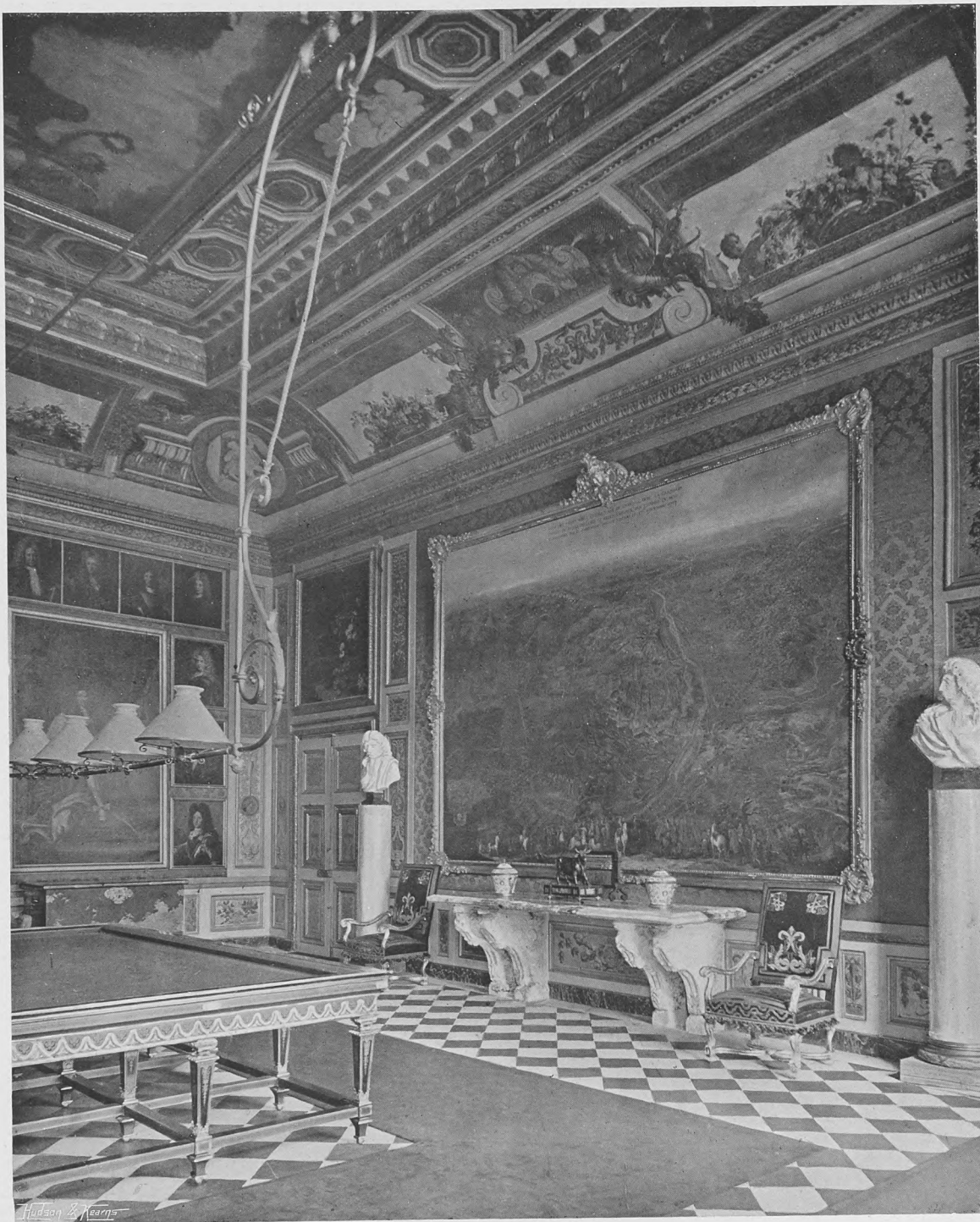
373.—IN THE BILLIARD ROOM.

the Estates of Brittany. Nantes was on the way to his own fortress of Belleisle. Fouquet felt he could go safely. Besides, if the King had wanted to arrest him it could have been done at Vaux. Obviously Mme. du Plessis-Bellièvre was exaggerating. He cheerfully gave up the place of "*Procureur-Général*" in Parliament on hearing that higher honours awaited him when that was gone. He sold it to M. de Harlay for one hundred thousand pounds, and sent the money to the King. Louis said never a word, and put it in his pocket.



The memoirs of D'Artagnan tell the next chapter in the story. Fouquet, of course, had offered D'Artagnan the bribe he offered everybody else while Mazarin was still alive. But the musketeer had given good reasons for refusing it. The two men had not openly quarrelled, but D'Artagnan had gone unwillingly to Vaux le Vicomte, and he received still more unwillingly the orders that awaited him at Nantes. Fouquet journeyed westward with no idea that the Cardinal—so lately dead—had left his name upon a black list of public robbers, to whose crimes the King's attention was urgently directed by his dying and most devoted servant. Fouquet remembered only that a large sum of money had cemented his own friendship with the great Condé; and that the Marquis de Créqui, who had married the daughter of his paid spy, Mme. du Plessis-Bellièvre, was in command of the only vessels by which Belleisle could be attacked. The King took very careful precautions. Soldiers were slowly drafted out in the direction of Belleisle, and the strict watch kept finally resulted in the capture of Fouquet's confidential man, who came out to warn his master of what he had seen going on. He carried a note from the governor of the fortress in the heel of his stocking, with nothing written except that "the bearer may be trusted." He died under torture, refusing to betray his master, or tell anything he knew.

Colbert was much annoyed; but there was evidence enough; and he was so secretly in Nantes that scarcely anyone knew that he had come with the King at all. It was essential that there should be no hint of danger at the last moment. Colbert then sent for D'Artagnan. "The King," it appeared, "had resolved on an important stroke to mark the real beginning of his reign"; and D'Artagnan had been chosen as the instrument to strike the blow. His Majesty, in fact, was very eager, not only "to be his own Prime Minister," as he had told Le Tellier and others after Mazarin's death in the



374.—VAUX LE VICOMTE: THE BILLIARD ROOM.

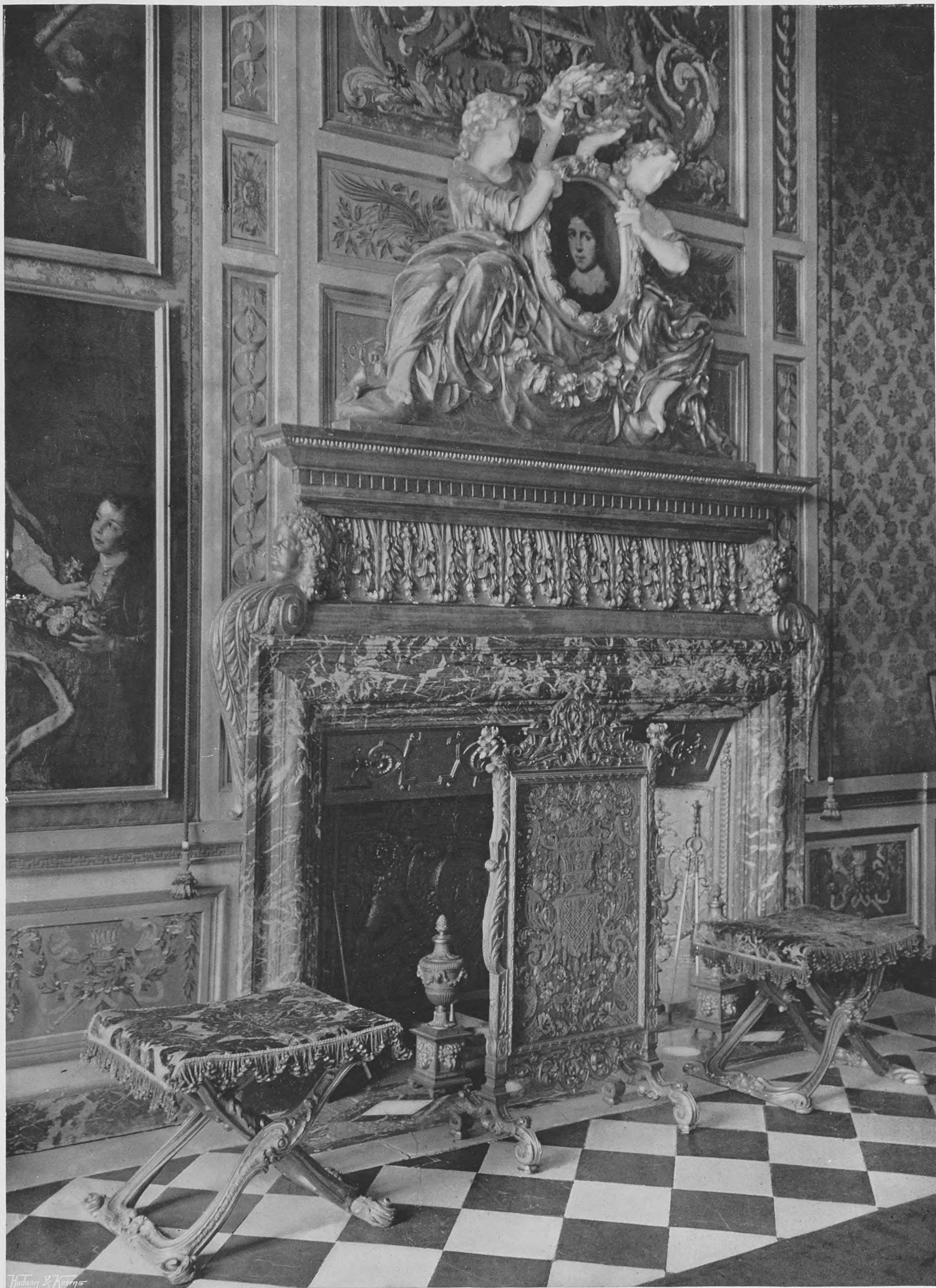


spring, but to reform the finances of France under Colbert's guidance, and begin to enjoy more pocket-money in the autumn. Much against D'Artagnan's will, therefore, the musketeer was ordered "to arrest Fouquet when leaving the Council, and then to conduct him to the castle of Angers and keep him in sight till further orders." At the "lever" next morning the King confirmed these orders and gave more explicit expression to his wishes.

Fouquet had been advised to send another man in his sedan chair, with the blinds down, to the council meeting at Nantes. He refused, believing nothing. After business had begun he felt sure nothing was wrong, for Louis was as suavely impenetrable as usual, and asked Fouquet more questions than was his wont, being secretly afraid that if he did not make use of this opportunity there would be no chance of getting any essential details out of the Surintendant later on. D'Artagnan was waiting all the time with ten of his men at the bottom of the staircase, dispersed here and there, as if by chance, but all within easy reach. After two hours Fouquet came out, "surrounded by a crowd of people, as are all the Ministers, especially those of War and Finance." On the last step, at the foot of which his chair awaited him, he was arrested, and the whole crowd of sycophants and beggars melted away in a moment. The reckless La Feuillade alone shouted a word of encouragement, out of pure bravado. Fouquet found speech enough to say that "the King was master to do all he liked," and disappeared into another chair that stood ready, in which he was taken to the house of an ecclesiastic of the cathedral near at hand. The Grand Provost at once arrested all his clerks, and every scrap of paper was immediately placed under seal. In a few moments a carriage arrived under escort of thirty musketeers with D'Artagnan at their head, and St. Mars, the "Maréchal des Logis." By them he was driven off to the castle of Angers and closely guarded. Belleisle soon afterwards surrendered. M. de Béthune, who had married Fouquet's daughter, was exiled with his wife. His brothers, the Abbé Fouquet, the Archbishop of Narbonne, the Bishop of Agde and the King's Ecuyer, were banished from France. From Angers, Fouquet was placed in the Donjon of Vincennes, and D'Artagnan, who knew that M. de Beaufort and the Cardinal de Retz had escaped from here, took over the guard from the Duc de Mazarin and placed a sentinel at the door, and another inside the room all night. As soon as the judges had been chosen for the trial, the prisoner was moved on to the Bastille. His office was given to Colbert, under the new title of Controller General of Finance. There were charges of treason with England, as well as wholesale peculation in France, against the prisoner, who was at first kept in a room with a view on "the bastion which is on the right hand of the road crossing from the Porte St. Antoine to enter the Grande Rue." Mme. de Sévigné, one of Fouquet's particular friends, wrote to M. de Pomponne, saying she had seen him there under D'Artagnan's guard, and it appears she managed in some clever way to make signals to him. Her letters give the most poignant description of his cleverness and skill throughout the trial. The squirrel's struggles were all unavailing. Both lion and serpent held him fast, and the cage doors soon closed on him for ever.

The life of the builder of Vaux le Vicomte is a sad thing to read after his imprisonment in the Bastille. "He who had been the most lively man in the world had become so quiet that one would have said it was another individual with the same face. He had regulated all his hours neither more nor less than if he had been in a convent. He knew what he had to do when he had prayed to God, by which, as was right, he began the day. This was to take up a book and read. When he had read for an hour or two he took ink and paper and commented on his reading. He next heard mass; then walked in his room till dinner; when he had dined he had half an hour's meditation; at four o'clock he again took up his pen to write something original. Afterwards, he would walk or look out of the window. Supper then appeared, and thus the days passed, one after the other, always in exactly the same way, except when he was examined." De Retz killed time in the Donjon of Vincennes by amusing himself with pet rabbits, ringdoves and pigeons; and found great consolation in the thought that he had made up his mind beforehand to amuse himself in that way if he should ever be imprisoned. The Coadjutor has left some equally instructive remarks on the embarrassment caused by servants during a period of disgrace. Now Fouquet, though he had no rabbits, was certainly well and faithfully served. We have seen one instance in the man who was tortured to death for revealing





375.—CHIMNEY-PIECE OF BILLIARD ROOM.



nothing about Belleisle. Péliſson, his secretary, is another. The poet of Bérart's ode at the famous fête was in the Bastille too. So was Fouquet's handsome young écuyer, who went mad in his cell, not having discovered Péliſson's cure for prison insanity, which consisted in scattering a thousand pins all over the floor and picking them up again. Bussy Rabutin occupied his similarly enforced leisure by writing *A History of the King*. Luckily, the scandalmonger got out again. A miserable pamphleteer who offended His Majesty died in hideous torments in the worst dungeon of Mont St. Michel. The handsome Vardes was sent to rot slowly to death for twenty years in the Tour de Constance at Aigues Mortes. Things did not look very bright for our Surintendant. Fouquet's only supporters were found among the nobility, who had thoroughly enjoyed his fêtes. Mme. de Sévigné remained his firm friend. Mlle. de Scudéry and La Fontaine echoed their distress in graceful language :

Remplissez l'air de cris de vos grottes profondes.  
Pleurez nymphes de Vaux, faites croître vos ondes.

But memories of Vaux le Vicomte cannot have been very consoling to its imprisoned master. He knew very well that the common people and the bourgeoisie would cheerfully have torn him

to pieces ; and such pensions as the twelve thousand francs a year he paid to Scarron were of little avail to him now. No literature could get him out of stone walls twenty-six feet thick. For three years the trial dragged on. At last, to the disgust of Colbert and the King, the Commission sentenced Fouquet to perpetual banishment from France. The defence had been skilfully conducted, and M. d'Ormesson had pleaded the prisoner's cause with great effect. The King refused to leave his prey. He altered the sentence to imprisonment for life. His spy, Mme. du Plessis-Bellièvre, was released from Montbrison. But Fouquet was sent first to Moret, near Fontainebleau, and afterwards to Pignerol, on the borders of Piedmont, where he was placed under the strictest custody of Saint Mars. The first news of the outside world reached him when Lauzun, the audacious little Cadet de Gascogne, was sent there, too, because his amours had frequently displeased (if not displaced) the King—Lauzun, who finally had aspired to the hand of "La Grande Mademoiselle" herself, the daughter of



376.—BEDROOM OF LOUIS XIV.

Gaston d'Orléans, and niece of Anne of Austria. But a far more famous prisoner shared the cells of Pignerol with Fouquet, a prisoner whom no one ever saw, and who was guarded with unbroken secrecy until his death—the Man in the Iron Mask.

Dumas suggests that this living mystery was Louis XIV, who was kidnapped at the fête of Vaux le Vicomte, so that his twin brother might take his place upon the throne. But Mr. Andrew Lang has finally demonstrated that it was Martin (known in prison as Eustache Dager), the valet of Roux de Marsilly, the Huguenot fugitive from Rochelle who escaped in the year of Fouquet's famous fête, had much treasonable correspondence with England, was captured in Switzerland, and finally was executed with hideous tortures in Paris, protesting his innocence to the last. What he really did will never be known. The fear that it might ever become known was a constant obsession to Louis XIV. So much so, that his unfortunate valet, Martin, or Dager, was kept in the strictest seclusion lest he might divulge a secret of which he was probably himself in ignorance. In July, 1669, this wretched valet was captured in London





377.—TAPESTRY IN THE BEDROOM OF LOUIS XIV.



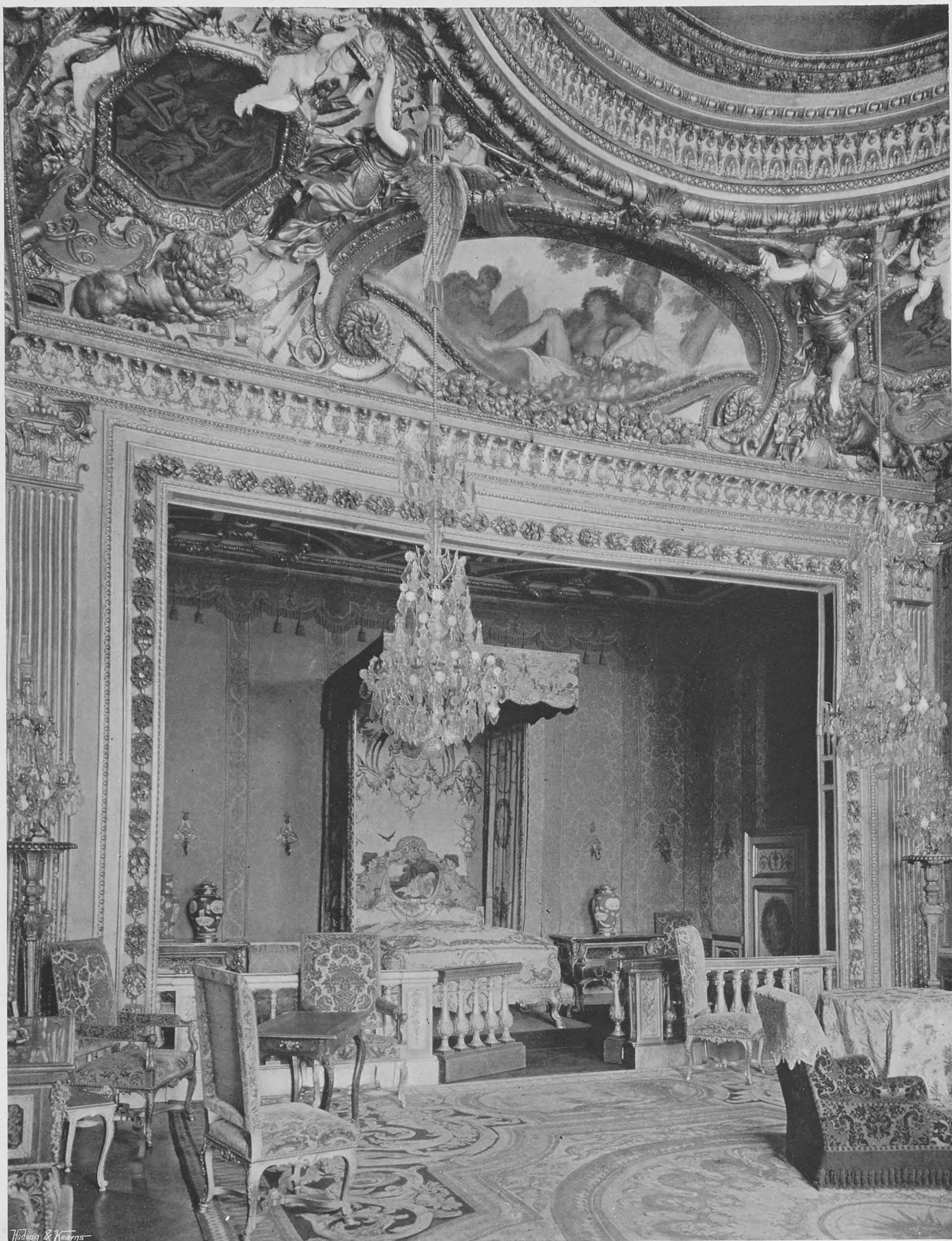
and brought to Pignerol. He was forbidden to speak to anyone on pain of death. The precautions used were so extraordinary that they have become proverbial ever since, and this man has invariably overshadowed all his fellow-prisoners. When Saint Mars suggested that he might be employed as a valet to Lauzun, Louvois refused, but said he might serve Fouquet in that capacity. Why the one and not the other we shall never know. Fouquet, it happened, who was fifty years of age when he first came to Pignerol, had amused himself for some time in doctoring a dropsical prisoner-valet, and teaching him to read. But this La Rivière was changed in 1675 for the mysterious masked prisoner. In 1678 Louvois sent Fouquet a sealed letter, which was handed to him by Saint Mars, unbroken. In it Louvois asked, "Had the new valet, Daurer, said anything to the old valet, La Rivière, as to the reasons for his (Daurer's) imprisonment?" Fouquet replied "No," and was forthwith accorded much greater liberty, being allowed to see his family, the officers of the garrison, and Lauzun, provided always that Lauzun and Daurer never met. In March, 1680, Fouquet died, just ten months before Count



378.—IN THE BILLIARD ROOM.

Mattioli, secretary to the Duke of Mantua, reached Pignerol in his turn. Soon afterwards Lauzun was released. Mattioli went mad. But the two valets, probably because of their occupation, were still sane, and were carefully guarded in the lower tower together. From Pignerol they were moved, still with the precautions on which Louvois invariably insisted, to Exiles. In 1687 La Rivière died. In May of the same year Daurer (the Iron Mask) was taken to the Isles Sainte Marguerite, off Cannes, by Saint Mars, who never left him. Meanwhile, the Minister Louvois died in 1691, and was succeeded by Barbézieux, who inherited the official anxiety about Daurer. In 1694 Mattioli died at Sainte Marguerite, whither he, too, had been transferred. In 1698 Barbézieux gave Saint Mars command of the Bastille, and the Man in the Iron Mask came up to Paris with him. In November, 1703, Daurer died in the Bastille, still in his mask, and so was buried. His secret was buried with him. To this day nobody knows what he had done; and it may well be that even the unhappy Fouquet was as ignorant as we are.





379.—BEDROOM OF LOUIS XIV.

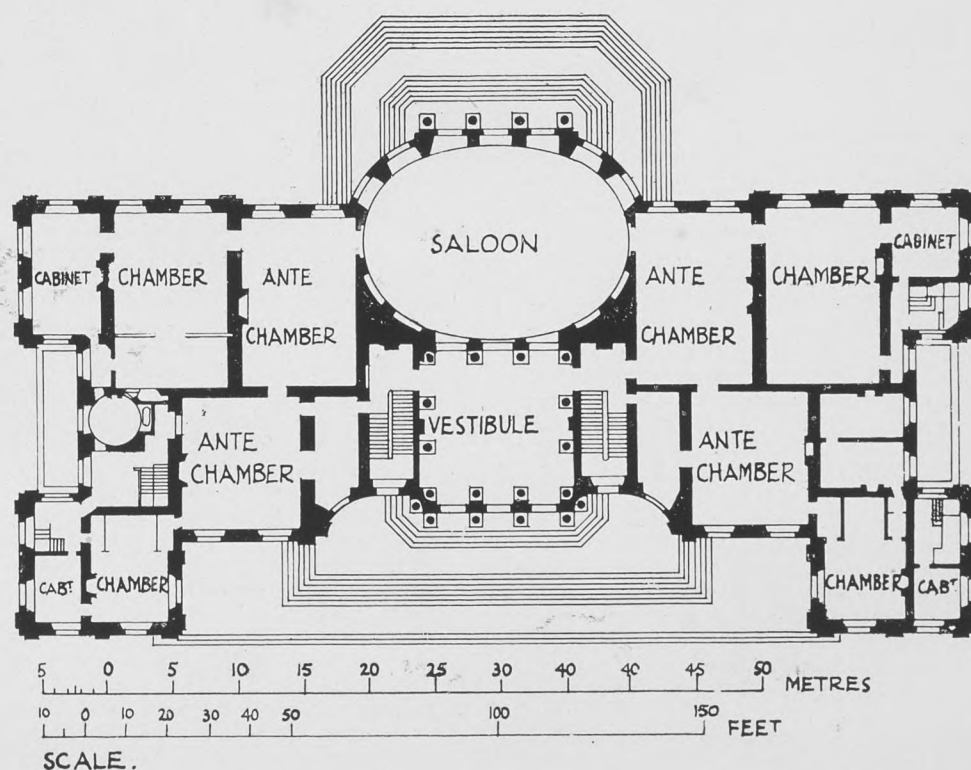


But that sealed letter from Louvois suggests that the old Surintendant knew something. Was the masked prisoner connected in any way with the great and fatal fête of Vaux le Vicomte, and was he one of the many whose doom was sealed on that extraordinary occasion? We can believe it—but there is no shadow of evidence.

I cannot here trace further what Colbert did when once "the serpent" had got "the squirrel" out of the way. But Louis left Vaux le Vicomte to Fouquet's son. The Surintendant's grandson became a peer under the singularly appropriate title of Marquis de Belleisle. In 1705 Mme. Fouquet sold Vaux le Vicomte to the Maréchal de Villars, whose pretty wife's portrait is in the château to this day, probably painted by Coypel, a trace of the times when Voltaire visited at Vaux, and when the great gardens were sadly neglected by their military owner. In 1764 the Marshal sold the estate to Gabriel de Choiseul, Duc de Praslin, under whose ownership the place still further suffered.

But in 1875 it passed into the cultured care of M. Sommier, the father of its present owner, of whom the greatest praise that can be said is that Vaux le Vicomte now is almost exactly the Vaux le Vicomte Fouquet built. Its restoration has been a work as worthy of modern France as was its creation of the seventeenth century. It remains a type of the "Grand Siècle" that will always be difficult to surpass, and that no private property has yet equalled in its own country.

By means of the photographs so carefully taken by Mr. Frederick Evans for this series of the Châteaux of France, my readers will be able to get a better idea of their multitudinous and varied beauties than has ever been possible before either in France or England. I desire also to tender my sincerest thanks to the many proprietors and Government officials who have made possible by their great kindness so desirable a consummation.



380.—PLAN OF VAUX LE VICOMTE.



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*Note.*—The LARGE numerals indicate ILLUSTRATIONS of the subjects indexed, and refer not to the figure numbers, but to the PAGES on which illustrations will be found. The SMALL numerals indicate REFERENCES IN THE TEXT.











